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**From Interaction to Presentation: Oral English Skills  
Development in the Thai University Context**

**Chutamas Sundrarajun**



**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance  
with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education in  
the School of Education**

**May 2007**

**CONTAINS  
PULLOUTS**

## ABSTRACT

The use of pair/group work has become a common phenomenon in Foreign Language education particularly in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), in primary and secondary schools and in higher education (HE) settings. The assumption underlying such pedagogical practice is that interaction plays a role in the learning and constructing knowledge and developing language skills. This dissertation investigates the way ideas are developed collaboratively, the roles of scaffolding and leadership in group interaction tasks, and the ways in which group interaction tasks (the process) contribute to students' performances in the oral presentations (the end product). The study uses a qualitative, multiple-case approach to investigate the classroom interactions of three groups of Thai undergraduate students on the Public Speaking in English course. They engage in two interaction tasks and two group oral presentations. The data were collected through video-recorded classroom interaction, field notes and stimulated recalls. The analysis employs a conversation analysis (CA) approach, and an Idea Framing Taxonomy (Tan, 2000) in order to identify the factors which generate effective group work, and thus successful oral presentations.

Overall, the study found that students employed interactional strategies that promote collaboration (e.g. adding, explaining, expanding, and questioning to name a few) and interactional strategies that facilitate decision making (e.g. taking leadership, accelerating discussion). The study also revealed that 'questioning' was the dominant strategy employed by the students. The use of the first language (L1; in this study L1 is Thai) was also found to play an important role in progressing the discussion. As such, informal talk helps students to achieve a sense of autonomy and agency which leads them to be more confident in contributing to group discussions and consequently in delivering oral presentations. Effective group work does not necessarily mean that students can work alone: teacher scaffolding and guidance play a key role. In the data the contribution of the teacher may be understood as formative assessment. The study identifies two implications for policy and practice in FL and TESOL classes in the HE sector: teachers can give more importance to formative assessment and in order to make group discussions more effective, teachers should train students with appropriate strategies.



## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated

♥ to my father Thawatjai Sundrarajun and my grandmother— people full of love and generosity -- two of my close family members who passed away during my doctoral studies;

♥ to my mother Mukda Sundrarajun, for her love, encouragement and emotional support.

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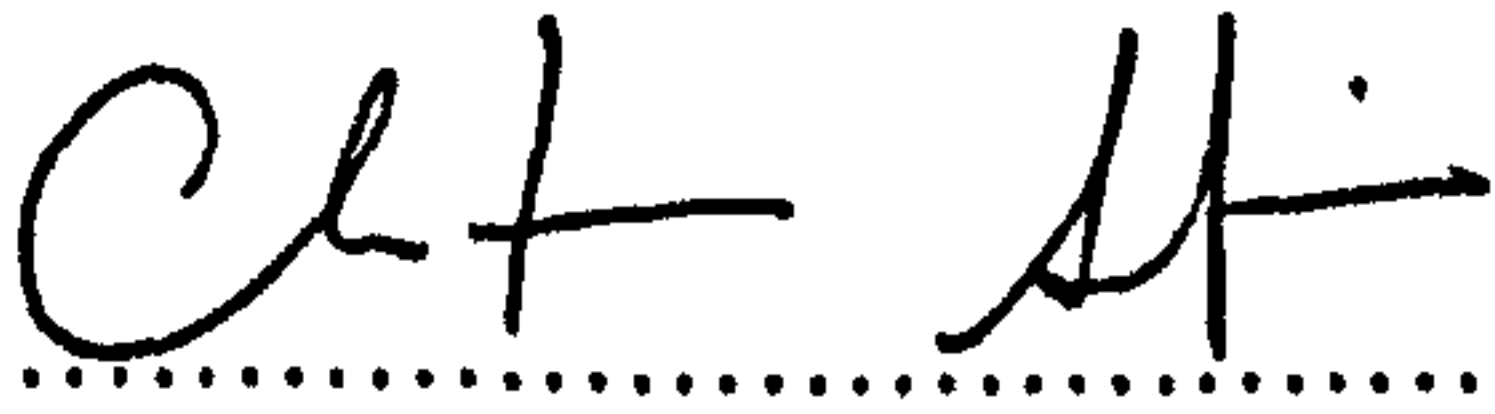
Thanks to my beloved family- my mother, Mukda Sundrarajun, my aunt, Wanna Engkasakulroj, and my brother, Thipat Sundrarajun for their support. Thanks to all my friends in Bristol particularly Ms.Nantheera Anantrasirichai and Mr. Jiraroth Sukolrat for their technical assistance, Ms. Podjanok Kanjanajuntorn, and Ms. Runchana Pongsaparn for their love and moral support throughout my studies.

**AUTHOR’S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represents those of the University of Bristol.

The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed .....  .....

Date ..... 17/5/07 .....

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## Transcription Conventions

1. =            **latching**
2. //    //       **indicates overlaps of speech**
3. (.)           **short pauses**
4. (6)           **number in brackets indicates a time gap in seconds**
5. ((    ))       **indicates non-verbal activities**
6. (   )          **indicates unclear or inaudible fragment on tape**
7. **yes**           **bold typed indicates emphasis of words**
8. underline   **underlined fragments indicate speaking prolonging the word**
9. [   ]          **brackets indicate words/phrases that are spoken in Thai**
10. ?            **a question mark indicates rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.**
11. **Bold**        **emphases**
11. ...          **indicates elipses in oral presentations; indicates fading in group discussions**



## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

1. Higher Education- HE
2. EFL-English as a Foreign Language
3. Informative Speech –IS
4. Persuasive Speech- PS
5. Initiating-INI
6. Adding-ADD
7. Evaluating-EVA
8. Contradicting- CONTRA
9. Diverging-DIV
10. Accepting-ACC
11. Repeating-REP
12. Questioning-QUES
13. Accelerating discussion- Accel. Disc.
14. Explaining-EXPL
15. Responding- RESP
16. Incomprehensible Input- Incompre. Input
17. Incomplete Utterance- Incompl. Utterance
18. Expanding- EXPD
19. Suggesting- SUGG
20. Guiding- GUID



# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Collaborative learning is still considered a complex phenomenon especially in the context of higher education (HE) particularly in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) because though many universities aim to increase demand for teaching and learning excellence, the oldest teaching method—lecturing to the class, still remains common. Also, though more interactive approaches are adopted in seminars and tutorial settings, it seems that the interaction is still dominated by the teacher (Walsh, 2006). As such, in this study, I aim to explore the more inclusive teaching and learning experience where the students are guided to adapt their learning styles through engagement in collaborative teamwork in the context of higher education (HE) in a setting where the medium of instruction is in English.

This chapter includes the research problems and my personal motivation for conducting the study. It then sets out the overall objectives, an overview of the study and the organization of this dissertation.

### **1.2 Setting the problem**

For almost a decade, the study of non native speaker interactions in the second language (L2) learning has brought attention to the importance of interaction to L2 development (e.g. Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; McDonough, 2004). These studies have focused on the use of group or pair work. The use of pair/group work has been a common phenomenon in L2 in both primary and secondary schools and in higher education (HE) settings and the assumption underlying such pedagogical practice is that interaction plays a role in the learning, constructing and obtaining knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1978) group work or group interaction can create opportunities for learning. Vygotsky also views cognitive developments as a result of a dialectical process, where the child learns

through shared problem solving experiences with someone else, such as parents, teachers, siblings or peers. However, Vygotsky's focus was more on child-adult interactions where a number of studies of group work have adopted Vygotsky's concepts and have been conducted in the primary or secondary educational settings (e.g. Fisher, 1999; Maybin, 1994; Wood and Wood, 1996 and Swain, 2000). Nevertheless, today there is a shift from studies on child-adult or teacher-student interaction to studies focusing more on student-student interactions in higher educational settings (DeGuerro and Villamil, 2000; Anton and DiCamilla, 1999; Storch, 2000). The studies were devoted to investigating pair/group interactions and if and how there are links between the collaborations with the quality of the end products (mainly written essays). In addition, one other significant study was conducted by Tan (2000) which was devoted mainly to idea generation during the collaboration of the students. Having mentioned the studies above there are very few studies which focused on oral presentations and to my knowledge, there are no studies which explored group interactions and relate the discussions to the end product such as that of the oral presentations.

In the present study, I attempt to examine the students' group interactions because as mentioned earlier, studies have suggested that group interaction tasks contributed significantly to the development of second language learning. However, few studies have focused on the functional goal such as that of developing skills in the oral presentations. From my professional experience as an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher at the university level, I have used group interaction tasks in my classes but was curious about the extent to which how they helped the students to develop their language skills and to develop the skills in generating ideas. As such, in line with several of the studies aforementioned, I aim to explore and understand what is going on during the interactions of the students. The oral presentations became part of the investigation because I perceive that university students are normally required to interact orally in various contexts and formal oral presentations seem to be a common task that students have to perform in the context of higher education. From my experience as a teacher, I also noticed that Thai students normally have difficulties in delivering formal speeches where in most cases, students ended up 'memorising' their scripts (this is probably due to their lack of confidence in speaking). This is because in Thailand, English is not an official language and students have the opportunities to



speak English only in their English courses<sup>1</sup>. However, with the growing importance of English language, several universities in Thailand have set up international programmes where the medium of instruction is in English. Hence, giving oral presentations in English seem to be the type of task which teachers normally assess their students' speaking skills on. However, it is apparent that teachers focused on the 'end product' and seemed to neglect the 'process' (how the students go about preparing the oral presentations). I believe it is insufficient to just look at the end product as it would not help the students to develop academically unless teachers know the problems or difficulties that the students might encounter and help them out during the course of completing the 'end product'.

Hence, in the current study, the focus of the interactions is on university students so I use the term 'student-student' interactions to refer to peer interactions. In line with Tan (2000) my aim is to find out how ideas are generated and developed throughout the course of the group discussions in L2 by investigating the language features students use in constructing knowledge together. I also aim to explore the relationship between the group interactions and the oral presentations.

### **1.3 Personal interests**

As mentioned earlier, it is still quite common in some teaching and learning classrooms in universities in Thailand where teachers still lecture to the students. Moreover, teachers also rely heavily on how students perform in their midterm and final exams rather than on how students perform in classroom activities. Having said this, it can be observed that because of the need to improve the teaching and learning quality in higher education, it is inevitable that teachers must also consider not only the content of what they teach but also the process issues (e.g. how students approach their learning). Thus, more classroom activities such as group work have been employed by the teachers.

---

<sup>1</sup> The medium of instruction of the universities in Thailand is normally in Thai language apart from the 'English subject' where the medium of instruction is in English.

Hence, as an EFL teacher at a university in Thailand I have found that my main concerns are that teachers, including myself, tend to use 'group work/discussions' in the classrooms. However, I have always wondered what and how students learn anything from doing the so called 'group work'. In line with what Walsh (2006:20) asserts, "an awareness of interactional processes is central to understanding of both teachers and learners of how language is acquired in formal context". As a teacher, I am not able to attend to every group of students in order to explore thoroughly how they go about completing a given task. Thus, I have always been interested in how students use language to think and to pool ideas together. My intention to investigate group discussions has also been inspired from reading the book by Mercer (2000:15) "Words and Minds" where Mercer asserts, "there are practical reasons for investigating how we use language together. It may, for example, help us understand why joint activity is sometimes more or less effective, and may enable us to improve education practice".

I would also like to relate to my own experience, not only as a teacher, but also tracing back to when I was a student. I remembered being engaged in group work in several courses and I had to contribute ideas together with other students. I considered myself a passive student so I found myself not being able to speak much. However, I recalled an incident in which a group member was very assertive and was asking the others to contribute and give opinions. I, of course, felt intimidated by him at first but later I found myself contributing to the group. It was apparent that probing from this particular group member pushed me to 'speak' and also I felt the 'responsibility' to contribute to the group. Not only did I start to like doing group work but now, as a student in the Doctoral programme at the University of Bristol, I find myself getting together with fellow colleagues and share ideas about our own work. I realised that sharing of ideas has often helped me to think more critically and thus broaden my perspectives. That is, sometimes I borrowed ideas from my colleagues and applied them in writing my assignments. I also came to realise that we were actually 'scaffolding' one another by guiding each other (e.g. giving examples of what we found in our own data) and asking each other questions. The guidance that my colleague provided to me has helped me to analyse my data more critically. I am also motivated by my concern of the teaching and learning in Thailand in which the focus is on the end product rather than on the process of how students are able to reach that end product. I believe teachers should pay more



attention to classroom interactions because learners are said to become more independent and are able to solve problems by themselves and can gradually acquire new knowledge and skill about L2 through process of 'dialogic inquiry' (Wells, 1999).

As such, in order to change the education practice of teachers in Thailand to become more process oriented, it is crucial that teachers know the practical reasons just like Mercer asserts, that understanding why joint classroom activities are more or less effective could improve the educational practice. Hence, teachers need evidence to change their normal practices and I believe this study can provide them with insights of how joint activities can benefit the students to develop academically. Thus, the current study aims to investigate in depth to the extent to which Thai students work collaboratively and how it affects the quality of the oral presentations (the end product).

#### **1.4 Main focus**

To examine the group interactions of the undergraduate Thai students, I decided to adopt a qualitative research design. The study was qualitative because I was interested in the processes and in understanding 'what is going on' during the interactions. Therefore, the study adopts an ethnographic, qualitative, multiple case-study approach to research classroom interactions of EFL Thai students. Data were collected through classroom observations (including writing reflexive notes and diary entries), audio and video recordings of group interactions in which the students use both L1 and L2 during the discussions, and through stimulated recall sessions with the students to obtain their perspectives. It is believed that close investigation on student-student interactions together with the contextual information from the classroom and the perspectives of the students may yield better understanding into 'how' the students learn and develop their L2 and critical thinking and its relationship to the oral presentations. Thus, the research questions that arise are as follows:

RQ1: How are ideas developed and generated in group interaction tasks?

RQ 2: In what ways do students collaborate in group discussions?

RQ 3: Is there evidence of peer scaffolding in group discussion tasks?

RQ 4: What types of scaffolding do students provide for each other during group discussion?



**RQ 5: In what ways is the collaboration related to the oral presentations?**

The last research question emerges with the aim of taking into account the students' perceptions and not to rely only on interaction data and the researcher's interpretations of these.

**RQ 6 What factors during the group discussion do students perceive to hinder or promote the quality of the oral presentations?**

## **1.5 Organisation of the dissertation**

**Chapter 1** gives the background and overview of the entire study.

**Chapter 2** provides key definitions of the terms used in this study. It explains the theoretical frameworks, highlights concepts from the general education literature regarding student-student interaction. It then reviews previous empirical investigations of student-student classroom interaction in relation to L2 learning and idea generation. It also points out areas in which further research is needed.

**Chapter 3** describes the research design. The chapter discusses the research paradigm. It is followed by the methodological approach and the rationale for the methods and procedures employed in the data collection and analysis process.

**Chapter 4** gives an overview of the three cases of the study. It then presents the analysis of Case 1 (UFO), a narrative analysis. The analysis aims at answering four research questions (RQ 1-RQ 4).

**Chapter 5** provides cross-case analysis from Cases 1, 2, and 3. The chapter begins with a general background of the students of the three cases. It is then followed by the category analysis of the three cases.

**Chapter 6** provides the findings of the relationship between the group interactions (process) and the oral presentations (end product). The chapter presents the analysis of (i) how the student-student scaffolding during the process of the discussion has an

influence on the quality of the oral presentations and (ii) what in the group discussion was important to the quality of the oral presentation. The chapter aims to answer two research questions (RQ 5 and RQ 6).

**Chapter 7** summarises the study's findings and explains the study's contribution to the field. The chapter discusses how Tan's idea framing taxonomy has been used to analyse student-student scaffolding and how the group discussions helped the students to develop academically. The chapter then provides the summary of the practical reasons why teachers in the Thai HE context and in other countries should be more process oriented. It concludes with the strengths, limitations and recommendations based upon the findings of the study and its potential contribution to language educational research and practice.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The use of group work in education is supported by a substantial body of research (see review of Long and Porter, 1985; review of Donato, 2004). With the advent of the learner centered approach, a common teaching strategy in the classroom is to assign group interaction tasks (e.g. group/pair work). In this chapter, I first locate my study in the socio-cultural theoretical framework. Next, I discuss relevant concepts and theories in relation to group interaction tasks. I then draw upon a range of literature review of group interaction tasks in terms of their research interests or aims, the theoretical framework, and the findings.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

##### **2.2.1 Socio-cultural approach**

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the concept of socio-cultural theory. The fundamental concept of socio-cultural theory is that human beings are social by nature and that human cognition develops first through social interaction. That is, learning and development occurs while the learners interact with the more knowledgeable members of a community within specific social and cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Lantolf, 2000; Donato, 2000). This theoretical framework is linked to the work of Vygotsky where he gives importance to reciprocity between the individual and society (cultural and historical influences). He also proposed that higher mental functions (language and thinking) developed first in the child when interacting with another person (Garton, 1992), this means Vygotsky sees language as a symbolic cultural tool, "a means of social intercourse" (Vygotsky, 1978: 53) hence, learning is a socially situated activity. Moreover, Vygotsky views cognitive developments as a result of a dialectical process, where the child learns through shared problem solving experiences with someone else, such as parents, teacher, siblings or a



peer. As he states,

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of ideas (Vygotsky, 1978:57).

This means that a child learns to think and how to think through interactions with the 'environment', in this case, environment refers to the small group interaction (Wertsch, 1991). This is in line with the proposed study as it sets out to examine the discourse of group interactions of the students and to examine how the group interactions help in promoting students to perform the group oral presentations through communicating their ideas with one another. However, Vygotsky focused mainly on the interactions of adult-child dyad or children in the primary level but in the present study, the focus is on peer interactions of university level students. I aim to look at how university students use language to generate ideas and how and what communicative strategies they use to collaborate during the group discussion. Following Vygotsky's (1978) view of learning that through interacting with peers, learners can move from lower ground (what one can do on one's own) to the higher ground (what one can do in collaboration with more capable peers). Moreover, in line with Vygotsky, Mercer (1995) points out that in talking together, children learn from each other as they pool ideas together and explore their agreements and disagreements about the tasks that they are engaged in. However, following both Vygotsky's perspectives and what Mercer points out, the focus is mainly on children but the main focus of the present study is on university students which I believe Vygotsky's concept can also be applied. For instance, the study by Tan, (2000), Stokoe, (2000), Donato, (1994; 2000) and Platt and Brooks (2002) focus on adult learners and have all adopted the Vygotskian theory as their theoretical framework. As one of the main objectives of the present study is to examine how knowledge construction and 'expertise' arise during the group interaction, it is crucial that the notion of zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding are discussed. The next two sections of this chapter is the discussion of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding in relation to classroom group interaction.

#### *a) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*

Vygotsky distinguished two modes of ZPD, namely adult-child and child-child interaction. In the present study, the focus is on peer interactions so I would refer to the 'child-child' interaction as 'student-student' interaction. Vygotsky's definition states that ZPD is the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish with the help of more capable peers, adults, or artefacts. Vygotsky views that peer interaction, scaffolding, and modeling are important ways to facilitate individual cognitive growth and knowledge acquisition. That is, ZPD is more appropriately perceived as the collaborative construction of opportunities for a person to develop his/her ability. Vygotsky also proposed that "an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers" (1978:90). This means, that learning can be assisted by other students through the help that they provide for each other when working collaboratively on the tasks but that Vygotsky seems to specify more on 'capable peers'. Wells (1999) argues that this is not necessarily true as students who are expert in one task might seek assistance in another task. The important factor is to build on each others' contributions in completing the task collaboratively as Wells (ibid: 324) asserts, 'for learning to occur in the ZPD, it is not so much a more capable other that is required as a willingness on the participants to learn with and from each other'.

Based upon Vygotskian theory, the current study seeks to analyse how knowledge are co-constructed between people as they talk together and how collaborative tasks might facilitate the students' knowledge acquisition and language development.

#### *b) Concept of Scaffolding*

The metaphor of scaffolding was introduced by Vygotsky particularly in the context of tutorial interactions between an adult and individual children. Scaffolding features, originally introduced by Wood and Bruner back in 1976 have been used with adult-child or parent-child interactions. Other features of scaffolding include that of Webster and Roe's framework of adult-child interactions (1998) and another is Lidz's twelve component behaviours of adult mediating (Lidz, 1991 in De Guerrero and Villamil,



2000). However, recently the scaffolding frameworks have been applied and adapted by several researchers (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Donato, 2000; De Guerrero and Villamil, 2000) to use with student-student interactions. The metaphors of 'scaffolding' (Wood and Wood, 1996) are as follows (also see Appendix 2.1 for Lidz's adult-child scaffolding frameworks mentioned earlier):

1. recruitment of the child's interest of the task,
2. maintaining an orientation towards task-relevant goals,
3. highlighting critical features of the task that the child might overlook, and
4. demonstrating how to achieve goals and controlling frustrations.

Hence, according to Wood and Wood (1996) scaffolding means that the role of the tutor is to ensure that the child's interest is adhered to the requirements of the task. The tutor must also have a strategy to focus the students' attention and encourage them to pursue a particular objective of the task. In highlighting the critical features of the task, the role of the tutor is to help make prominent certain features of the task that are relevant to the solution to a problem by providing clues and hints. Effective guidance in ensuring that the students are involved actively executing the solution to the task and ability to reduce frustration of the students while doing the task is also necessary from the tutor (Shayanide, 2000; Wood and Wood, 1996). Though the focus of Wood and Wood is on teacher-student interaction, I believe scaffolding does exist in student-student interaction where participants have equal status and in which they all struggle to develop ideas. For instance, an empirical study by Donato (1994) showed that students can also provide the same type of guidance and support for each other just like that of how adults provide children. Other studies on scaffolding include the work of Ohta (1995) and De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) which will be discussed in detail in section 2.3.2c. Hence, the concept of cognitive psychology and scaffolding will also be adopted as a framework in this study because according to Wertsch (1979 in Donato, 1994: 41) 'scaffolded performance is a dialogically constituted interpsychological mechanism that promotes the novice's internalisation of knowledge co-constructed in shared activity' and this is in line with one of the aims of the present study. In the next section, I discuss Bakhtin's perspectives on language learning then I go on to differentiate the terms 'collaborative learning' and 'cooperative learning' followed by the theory of collaborative learning.



### *c) Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language Learning*

As the main purpose of this study is analysing talk, it is crucial to take into account Bakhtin's view of language who focused on *utterance*, the '*real unit*' of speech of communication (Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin further argues that since "speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people" (1986: 71), 'utterances', rather than isolated linguistic features, should be considered as primary linguistic units in the investigation of verbal communication. Bakhtin also offers a valuable suggestion as to how participation in discourse allows the child to appropriate or as Vygotsky refers to as 'to internalize the mental functions encountered in particular instances of interaction with others'. Bakhtin writes,

the unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuous and constant interaction with others' individual utterances. This experience can be characterized to some degree as the process of assimilation-more or less creative-of others' words (and not the words of a language). Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works) is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness', varying degrees of awareness and detachment. The words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework and accentuate (1986:89)

According to Wertsch (1991) he expands the above notion that just as we learn to speak by ventriloquating others' words (meaning projecting one's voice from another source), so we also take over their ideas and values by transforming them to suit our own needs and purposes. He further argues that this process is not applied only to childhood but it continues throughout our lives whenever we come across any fruitful new ideas in the utterances of others as we engage with various mode of collaborative knowledge building. Wells (1999) sums up that in educational settings in particular, language serves as the principal medium understandings in the past are available for uptake and use in the present. Ideas do not exist independently of the language processes through which they are communicated for particular purposes or occasions.

The works of Bakhtin and Vygotsky have also been adopted by several educational researchers (e.g. Tan, 2000; Morita, 2000; Platt and Brooks, 2002) and these researchers have also shifted from the teacher-student interaction to student-student interaction. This is for the purpose of broader understanding of the influence of speech on thought to include more than just the expert/novice interaction.



### 2.2.2 Collaborative learning vs. co-operative learning

The terms collaborative and cooperative learning have been used interchangeably and many researchers did not differentiate the differences between the two terms (e.g. Shayanide,1998; Light & Mevarech, 1992; Jacob *et al*, 1996). In this section, I aim to (i) differentiate the two terms ‘collaborative learning’ and ‘cooperative learning’, (ii) discuss the different perspectives of collaborative learning and why I adopt the term ‘collaborative learning rather than ‘cooperative learning’, and (iii) how the CA approach is an appropriate way of informing the concept of collaboration. I first provide the definitions of collaborative learning and cooperative learning in Table 2.1 below:

**Table 2.1 Definitions of Collaborative and Cooperative Learning**

<i>Collaborative Learning:</i>	<i>Cooperative learning:</i>
<p>-Panitz's (1996) definition of collaboration is, it is a philosophy of interaction and personal lifestyle and the group members' abilities and contributions are emphasised, hence, collaborating is student centered.</p> <p>-According to Macaro (1997) collaborative learning means learners are encouraged to achieve common learning goals by working together with respect for one another's language input;</p> <p>-Cranton (1996) further suggests that collaborative is best for acquiring communicative knowledge (mutual understanding and social knowledge). Through the process of exchanging ideas, feelings, experiences, information, and insights, the collaborative group comes to a shared understanding that is acceptable to all group members (p. 26-28).</p>	<p>-Kagan (1994) provides a definition that cooperative learning has structured features which involves a series of steps with prescribed behaviour at each step of an activity hence, it is more teacher centered.</p> <p>-Panitz (1996) defines cooperative learning as a set of processes which help people interact together to accomplish a specific goal or develop an end product which is usually content specific.</p> <p>-Cranton (1996: 26-28) says that cooperative learning is more appropriate for the acquisition of instrumental knowledge (scientific, cause-and-effect).</p>

From the definitions above, the fundamental attributes are similar but the amount of structure, the amount of learner self-direction, the role of the teacher, and the academic environment of each is essentially different (LeJeune, 1999). The key phrases for collaborative learning are mainly ‘student centered’, and learning is to acquire ‘mutual or shared understanding’. On the other hand, for cooperative learning, the key words are ‘teacher centered’, ‘content specific’ and learning is to acquire ‘instrumental

knowledge'. As such, it seems that collaborative learning is less technique-oriented, less prescriptive and focused more on the acculturation into the learning community. In addition, through providing collaborative activities to the students, they are given a chance to be responsible in organising and planning their learning, to take charge of their own language learning and abilities to recognise the value of taking responsibilities for their own objectives, content, progress, method and techniques of learning (Macaro, 1997:168), hence, students become autonomous. Moreover, the replacement of the cognitive theory over the behaviourist learning theory has contributed to a perception that language learners are intelligent decision maker (*ibid*, 1997). The freedom that autonomy brings then, is the relation between the learners, the content and the process of learning (Gathercole, 1990). Therefore, collaborative learning promotes autonomy as teachers mentor peer interaction rather than control the learning environment. Next, is the question of what generates the learners' behaviours in collaborative learning. In relation to the definitions below, I believe that shared understandings of the students who are working together is an important factor in generating how students think and behave as LeJeun (LeJeune, 1999:1 cited Brufee, 1999) asserts, 'the collaborative learning group also allows individuals to observe perspectives of other group members thus expanding one's own perspective. As individuals in the group observe other's thinking and reasoning processes, opportunities to reflect upon their own thinking are also presented'. The differences between the two concepts are summarised in Table 2.2 below:

**Table 2.2 Differences between collaborative and cooperative learning**

<b>Collaborative learning</b>	<b>Cooperative Learning</b>
Group roles are defined by the group	Specific role assignments provided by teacher
Instructor does not monitor group work, hence, it is more student centered	Instructor is involved in series of steps of the group work, hence it is more teacher centered
Suitable for acquiring communicative knowledge i.e. mutual understanding and social knowledge	Suitable for acquiring instrumental knowledge i.e. scientific, cause-and-effect



*a) Perspectives on collaborative learning*

I would like to discuss the different perspectives on collaborative learning and why I decided to adopt the term 'collaborative' rather than 'cooperative' learning. Vygotsky (1962) stressed that collaborative learning, either among students or between students and a teacher, was essential for assisting students in advancing through their zone of proximal development (ZPD), hence, filling the gap between what they could accomplish by themselves and what they could accomplish in cooperation with others. Vygotsky also claimed that speech is the most widely used and an important means for humans to organize social interaction, to regulate others, and oneself and that higher mental functioning in an individual is rooted in social life (Wells, 1999:117; Wertsch, 1991:25). With effective interaction, especially through speaking with their peers or teachers, learners naturally develop and extend their linguistic knowledge. However, Vygotsky's perspective emphasises teaching and learning rather than joint learning (Mercer, 1996) but several researchers have adapted ideas from the study of 'asymmetrical (teacher-learner) to studies that are more 'symmetrical (learner-learner). For example, the work by Tan (2000) adopts the Vygotskian idea that group work or group interaction can create opportunities for learning. Through interacting with more capable peers, learners can move from the lower ground (what one can do on his/her own) to higher ground (what one can do in collaboration with more capable peers). Her study focuses on how participants collaborate in the negotiation of conversational meaning or contribute to the successful management of turn-taking and also to cognitive outcomes (e.g. what knowledge and ideas are constructed through talk and how by investigating how students form of ideas and the links between ideas). She points out that group interaction can be seen as a process of socialising students into a view of knowledge; or alternatively, the group interaction patterns will reflect the views of knowledge the students have been consciously or unconsciously socialised through both their previous and present educational experience. In addition, Morita (2000) proposes the concept of 'language socialization'. The term means the process by which children and other newcomers to a social group become socialized into the group's culture through exposure to and engagement in language-mediated social activities. An important element suggested by Morita (*ibid*: 282) is that 'language socialization is the



participation of more competent members of the social group along with learners or less proficient participants’.

Consequently, Rogoff (1990) and Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that language socialization, is a bidirectional process, that novice members actively seek and structure the assistance of more competent members and vice versa competent members also learn from novices. Rogoff calls this dynamic process ‘guided participation’ while Lave and Wenger calls the interaction as the ‘legitimate peripheral participation’. In addition, Lantolf, in support of Vygotsky’s notion of ZPD (2000:17) asserts,

it seems clear that people working jointly are able to co-construct contexts in which expertise emerges as a feature of the group. This is important, since without such a possibility it is difficult to imagine how expertise of any kind could ever arise; unless of course we were to assume an a priori biological endowment that specified the precise properties of the ability in question. But are we willing to accept that biology alone is responsible for the rise of literacy, numeracy, the invention of computers, legal system, etc? The ZPD then, is more appropriately conceived as the collaborative construction of opportunities.

Similarly, Van Lier (2000) proposes the notion, ‘affordances’. In terms of language learning, affordance consists of opportunities for learning to the active and participating learner. What becomes an affordance depends on what the ‘organism<sup>2</sup>’ does, what it wants and what is useful for it. In relation to language learning, this means if the learner is active and engaged in the activity that he/she is doing, he/she will perceive linguistic affordances and use them for linguistic action. Collaborative learning has also been applied in computer-based activities such as in the work of Mercer, (1996) and Fisher (1993). In Mercer’s study on children’s talk in collaborative activity, he argues that working with a more competent peer is not necessarily helpful for learning because working with a more knowledgeable or capable partner who dominates the talk or in making decisions can also hinder rather than help the less able student. Similarly, Fisher (1993:241) asserts, ‘activities which encourage a true sharing of ideas amongst essentially equal partners are likely to be a fruitful way of encouraging children to test out their assumptions and develop their thinking’.

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<sup>2</sup> Here, Van Lier used the word organisms to refer to all living organisms such as the trees, plants and insects. All the organisms in the environment need to depend on each other (e.g. in the forest, leaves scan serve as food to other living organisms). The same is with learners who are engaged in an activity where they can ‘afford’ and benefit from one another by participating with each other through interactions

From the definition presented, I adopted the term collaborative learning mainly because as stated above, it is student centered and it emphasises the process of exchanging ideas, feelings and information. Moreover, the group members assign roles among themselves and the instructor does not monitor the group but rather, played the role as the facilitator.

In addition to what has been discussed above, Donato (2004) points out how collaborative learning research differs from the other forms of research on interaction and second language learning. In Donato's (2004) review of several studies on group interactions, he asserts that interaction does not categorically always mean collaboration. This is why I decided to investigate group work because in line with Donato, I believe interaction means talking which does not always mean the students are collaborating. In my opinion, when there is collaboration that is when the actual learning occurs (e.g. when peer assists one another; also see definition of collaboration earlier).

In order to find a common ground, Donato further drew three perspectives on collaboration from Fullan (1999 in Donato 2004), Gee (2003 in Donato, 2004) and Petrovsky (1985 in Donato, 2004) as follows:

- Fullan perceives collaboration to foster diversity but at the same time, build trust and coherence among the group members. That collaboration is the emergence of new knowledge and growth for the group.
- Gee introduces the notion of affinity groups in which the group members bond with each other through jointly constructing the group's plans or activities.
- Petrovsky asserts that socially constructed activity would mediate all interpersonal relations which is the core of the collective.

Donato then summarises the three conceptualisations as follows: Collaboration involves (1.) a meaningful core activity such as creating a visual product or developing curricular innovations and that social relations develop as a result of working together towards a common goal; (2). recognition of individuals' contributions of a common goal, and (3). building of group coherence within and among social relations and knowledge distributed among the group members.



Hence, I hope to take the three conceptualisations into account in the analysis stage of the present study. From the discussion above, the key word that I place emphasis on is 'collaboration' as mentioned earlier that I am interested in collaborative patterns of the group work. Referring back to Vygotskian perspective, his approach centralises on the role of adults in promoting children's development and particularly putting emphasis on 'asymmetrical' interactions in which the participants are prominently different in the level of ability as that of an adult and a child. Nonetheless, I believe that the same effect would occur in 'symmetrical' interactions where the participants possess similar level of abilities (e.g. English language proficiencies). This is supported by Light and Glachan (1985) that though learners working with a more skilled partner might be the most effective but interacting with a partner with equal skill or even one with less advanced skill might still yield progress.

Next, I discuss the concept of conversation analysis as I believe the approach emphasises on the 'procedural' aspect of the group interactions. The next section discusses the reasons for adopting the conversation analysis (CA) approach.

*b) Collaboration in interaction informed by the conversation analysis approach*

In this section I discuss how conversation analysis approach is an appropriate way in informing the concept of collaboration. As mentioned earlier, I am interested in the procedural bases of the interactions as to how students plan their ideas collectively, and how ideas are developed by examining the language features that students use. Therefore, I wish to place emphasis on the process of the interaction. The methodological issues of conversation analysis, however is discussed in Chapter 3.

Conversation analysis is a branch of ethnomethodology developed by Sacks (1992) and Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) that examine the fundamental organization of talk in interaction which are exhibited by the participants in a wide range of social interaction (Mori, 2002). It focuses solely on human actions which are evidenced through talks. The CA approach mainly traces how participants interpret and analyse each others' actions and develop shared understandings of the progress of the interaction



(Seedhouse, 2004: 13). The reasons I decided to adopt the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach are as follows:

1. I regard the naturally occurring group discussion as the primary data, just like the CA practitioners.
2. CA is in the business of studying aspects of 'social life' in the sense of 'people doing things together' (ten Have, 1999). In this case, I observe how students work together as a group.
3. CA forces the research to focus on the interaction patterns that emerged from the data. That is, the data are allowed to 'speak for themselves' (Walsh, 2002; ten Have, 1999)
4. CA takes into account the interdependency of turns and the social practices at work which enable participants in a conversation to make sense of the interaction and contribute to it (Walsh, 2002; Seedhouse, 2004)
5. CA aims to discover "how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns of talk, with a central focus on how sequences of action are generated" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 14 in Seedhouse, 2004: 13). This is in line with one of the aims in this study where I seek to examine what is going on in the group discussion and how knowledge and ideas are generated.
6. CA approach is able to cope with the goal-oriented nature of institutional discourse, in which the behaviour and discourse of the participants are influenced by the goal towards which they are striving (Walsh, 2002).

This then, leads on to the interactional organization that CA focuses on which is the *adjacency pair*. According to Heritage (1984a in Seedhouse, 2004:17), adjacency pair means the basic building-blocks of *intersubjectivity*. Intersubjectivity is mutual understanding and one of the main objectives of CA is how we (the interactants and the analysts) are able to achieve shared understanding of each other's actions. Adjacency pairs and sequence organisation are called the 'building blocks of intersubjectivity' because interactants use them to display their understanding of each other's turns. As a result, this permits the analysts to follow the progress of the interactants' intersubjectivity (*ibid*, 2004:22), hence, I aim to adopt this approach in my analysis. Additionally, because activities or speech events are built out of particular components

of actions, speech acts are central to all forms of interactions. That is, utterances are interpreted in terms of to what extent they conform to or depart from the expectations that are attached to the conversation in which they occur (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Hence, a question establishes the relevance to an answer such as 'yes' 'no' 'ok'. These responses are more than just acknowledgement but they also serve as an engagement between the interlocutors. As such, speech acts were also taken into account in the analysis. Apart from the CA, I also aim to use relevant interaction frameworks in my analysis which is discussed in the next section.

### 2.2.3 Classroom interaction frameworks

There are several student-student interaction frameworks that researchers use in analysing pair and group interactions. They are student-student interaction which are: 1) Tan's idea framing taxonomy, 2) Interactional modification of negotiation and teacher-student interaction which are: 3) I-R-F Acts, and 4) twelve component behaviors of adult mediating instruction (Lidz,1991 in De Guerrero and Villamil,1996) and scaffolding features (Donato, 1994; Wood and Wood, 1996). (See Table below).

**Table 2.3 Pair/Group interaction frameworks**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tan (2000) proposes the taxonomy of idea framing in order to examine how ideas are generated. The taxonomy is used to examine the interaction in terms of the various conceptual links in which new ideas are generated and the degree of cognitive load that is involved during the discussion, as well as the academic value of different types of idea framing. Tan divides the idea framing into two types (see Appendix 2.2).</li> <li>2. Interactional modification of negotiation which Pica and Doughty (1985) applied in their study on group work (see Appendix 2.3). The interactional features are used to confirm that the utterances are clearly understood by all interlocutors in the group discussions in order to prevent communication problems.</li> <li>3. I-R-F Acts is introduced by Coulthard (1985) and is normally associated with teacher-student interaction. Most teachers would produce interaction features of IRF cycle where the teacher initiates, learner responses and then teacher follows up (see Appendix 2.3).</li> </ol>
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4. Lidz's (1991 in Guerrero and Villamil, 2000: 53) twelve component behaviors of adult mediating instruction, Donato's (1994) and Wood and Wood's (1996) scaffolding features are also important features that are used to analyse classroom interactions but it is focused mainly on teacher-student interactions (see Appendix 2.1)

The frameworks that I aim to use as guidelines are mainly the Tan's taxonomy and the interactional modification of negotiation since I have applied it in the pilot study and found some of the features that can be applied in analysing group interaction tasks (see Chapter 3 for details).

In the next section, I set out to review the studies which are classroom based research mainly in terms of the approaches and their theoretical frameworks aims, procedures, and findings.

### **2.3 Review of research of classroom group interactions**

In this section, I provide an overview of research on student-student interactions in L2 in which several studies have adopted a sociocultural framework. The selected studies are summarised in Table 2.4 below. This is followed by annotations on the general patterns that emerged from the methodology and the findings of the studies. I also highlight the main questions, methodological strategies and findings that are likely to be relevant to the present study.



**Table 2.4: Literature Review Grid: Empirical Studies of Student-Student Interactions**

Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
McDonough, (2004)	Do learners who participate in interactional features during pair and small group activities demonstrate improved production of target forms?	-16 Thai EFL intermediate level learners: 12 women and 4 men studying in the undergraduate programme; average age 18-20 years; None of the learners have been exposed to English as a medium of instruction or communication except for one student (the student visited a family member in the U.S. for two weeks)  -6 lecturers who taught the same course	-Questionnaires: open-ended, multiple choice and scalar response items to obtain students' perceptions of pair and small group activities. -Three oral tests that elicited target structures created -Use of audio-tape in collecting the data (group and pair activities) -semi-structured interviews (both in Thai and English) were conducted to obtain lecturers' perceptions of pair and small group activities.	- Learners produced self-initiated modified output more often than other initiated modified output and rarely took opportunities to respond to peer feedback by modifying their output  - Learners believed that peer interaction through pair and small group activities was useful for practicing oral communications skills, but less useful for learning English grammar.
Stokoe, (2000)	To study educational talk in interaction specifically on the production of topical talk in a university seminar context	-Undergraduate and post graduate students drawn from psychology from 30 separate classes. - One small group of students between 3-6 participants aged 21 or more who speak English as their first language.	-Students were video recorded -The recorded data were read repeatedly in conjunction with the video data	Although students oriented to the task demands and accepted an educational agenda for their talk, the process of topical production followed certain patterns which include 'clarification request' (e.g. students checked the instructions for their task)

Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Donato, (1994)	<p>-To illustrate how students co-construct language learning experiences in the classroom setting.</p> <p>-To uncover how L2 development is brought about on the social plane.</p> <p>-Seeks to answer the question of whether learners can exert a developmental influence on each other's interlanguage system in observable ways.</p>	Three French students who had been working together for a period of ten weeks on a variety of small group projects before the data was collected.	Use of audio-tape in recording group interaction tasks.	<p>-Learners are capable of providing guided support to their peers during collaboration</p> <p>-Scaffolding occurs routinely as students work together on language learning tasks.</p>
Tan, (2000)	<p>-To investigate the way knowledge is constructed and the ways ideas are developed in group work in academic settings and how</p> <p>-To investigate the role of language in mediating the process of learning and generating ideas;</p> <p>-To address the cross-cultural aspect of talk and interaction knowledge construction;</p> <p>-To investigate the educational role of talk in both divergent and convergent group discussion tasks in higher education</p> <p>-To investigate the performance of students working on a writing task</p>	<p>Malaysian and British undergraduate students on the BEd programme</p> <p>- 6 core Malaysians (studying in third year and have stayed in the UK for 1 year)</p> <p>- 6 British students</p>	<p>-Interviews:semi-structured interviews were conducted</p> <p>-Observations: descriptive and selective observation (total of 32 tasks:19 mono-national settings and 13 tasks in bi-national settings)</p> <p>-Field notes</p>	<p>-Through divergent interaction tasks, both less capable peers and experts play a significant part in triggering each other's ideas in the discussion.</p> <p>-ideas are generated in different directions</p>



Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Storch, (2001)	<p>-To examine how collaborative the pair-work is.</p> <p>-To examine whether there were links between the way the dyads interacted and the quality of the written product.</p>	<p>-3 pairs of ESL students undertaking the course: Advanced English as a Second Language1 (AESL 1);</p> <p>-students possess low-upper intermediate writing proficiency</p>	<p>-Students were asked to self-select into pairs to work on a writing task in preparation for a report.</p> <p>-Tape recorders were placed on the desks to record the pair talk.</p> <p>-Observation notes were employed: noting of time the pairs took to complete the task, level of engagement and salient features of interactions</p>	<p>-There were differences in the function that pronouns served in the interactions, particularly in the use of first-person singular and second-person pronouns</p>
Fisher, (1993)	<p>To examine how peer groups develop their ideas by identifying the differences in three types of discourse: exploratory, cumulative and disputational talk and to describe factors which may have contributed to those differences</p>	<p>Primary school children from 10 schools based in Buckinghamshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire</p>	<p>-Video recording of small groups of children working at computers as part of their normal classroom work during the SLANT (Spoken Language and New Technology) Project for two years.</p> <p>- teachers are the ones to group the students</p>	<p>-In classroom peer-group learning contexts, support of the teacher is needed though he/she may not be actively involved in the particular task.</p> <p>-The extracts that were studied generally falls under three categories: Disputational talk, Cumulative talk and Exploratory talk.</p> <p>-ZPD development might occur in a situation in which the participants have equal status and in which both are struggling to develop an idea.</p> <p>-Repetitions serve as group cohesion function and mostly used by the group member who contributes in the decision making process.</p>



Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Morita, (2000)	<p>What are the social, cultural, and intellectual values that are promoted in graduate courses in TESL program and thus that graduate students must learn in order to become competent members of the academic community? What are the goals of OAPs and what is the nature of graduate students' discourse socialisation in relation to OAPs? How do students perceive OAPs and their learning in relation to this activity? What kind of difficulties do NNs experience in performing OAPs? How do they cope with any difficulties?</p> <p>According to the students and instructors, what are the elements of good OAPs?</p>	<p>-Two instructors for the courses and all 21 graduate students taking either or both of these courses;</p> <p>-6 students were non-native speakers</p>	<p>Data was collected through 8-month period through:</p> <p>-classroom observations of 40 lessons; video recordings and transcriptions of 25 Oral Academic Presentations (OAPs); review of the OAPs with the researcher followed by formal and informal interviews with students and teachers; two open-ended questionnaires filled out by students, and collections of relevant documents (e.g. course outlines and OAP handouts)</p>	<p>- Students feel the need to work collaboratively more than working in isolation but there are limited chances to work together outside the classroom and some perceived competition as a factor that could work against collaboration.</p> <p>-Found that instructors provided students with ideas of the appropriate register to use and possible approaches</p> <p>- process in the preparation of the OAPs help learners learn to organize their presentations in a coherent way;</p>

Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
De Guerrero & Villamil, (2000)	-To observe the mechanisms by which strategies of revision take shape and develop in the interpsychological space created when 2 learners are working in their respective ZPDs.	-Part of a larger study involving 40 dyadic interactions: 2 male intermediate ESL college learners, native speakers of Spanish, who were enrolled in ESL communication skills course that emphasized the development of writing.	-Audiotaped conversation and transcribed written mode. -Collect writer's first draft (which was jointly revised) and final draft (submitted 1 week after peer revision) -For analysis, the transcriptions were segmented into episodes (16 episodes were identified); each episode was subjected to microgenetic analysis, that is: a. moment-to moment changes in behaviour that might signal development of revision skills through mediated assistance and b. the scaffolding mechanisms were observed	-It was observed that throughout the interaction was the establishment of intersubjectivity between the learners (the reader and the writer). -The task allowed the learners to reorganise knowledge of the L2 instructional and rhetorical aspects and to make knowledge explicit for each other's benefit, basically, the scaffolding was mutual. -the learners were creatively co-constructing their own system of making meaning through words in an L2. - L1 served as an instrument of task control; L1 was also used to make explicit connections between both languages that might facilitate expression in the L2.
Anton& Dicastilla, (1999)	-To examine the use of L1 in the collaborative interaction of adult learner of Spanish who are native speakers of English.	-five dyads of adult learners of Spanish completing a writing task in a foreign language class	-Audio recordings of three collaborative sessions in a language laboratory and audiotapes transcribed	- L1 is beneficial for language learning as it acts as critical psychological tool that enables learner to construct effective collaborative dialogue in the completion of the meaning-base language tasks;  - L1 functions as a means to create a social and cognitive space in which learners are able to provide each other and themselves with help throughout the task.



Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Ohta, (1995)	- to examine how scaffolding occurs in a learner-learner pair, specifically inquiring how scaffolding functions in pair activity (role play) with learners with different level of L2 proficiency	-six second year university level Japanese class at an urban American state university.	-Audio and video recordings of 100-minute Japanese class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- learners with weaker skills can benefit the more advanced learner during the peer collaboration in terms of language</li> <li>- the learners actively contribute their strengths to help one another through the process of collaborative learning in the ZPD.</li> </ul>
Mori, (2002)	- the study explores the relationship among the task instruction, the students' reaction to the instruction during their pre-task, planning and the actual development of the talk with the native speakers.	-a group of students enrolled in upper level Japanese courses at an American university.	-videotape approximately 12 hours of classroom interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in the planning stage the students (with the focus on the content of discussion by compiling a list of sequence-initiating actions-questions) contributed to a more coherent and natural discussion during the actual talk with the native speakers; the discussion was afforded by the students' production of spontaneous utterances</li> </ul>
Fulcher, (1996)	-Investigates issues on the use of tasks in oral tests with reference to group discussions	47 Cypriat students registered in EFL programme; Age-15 yrs. 7 months; 21 female and 26 male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students were asked to attempt 3 oral tests (2 one-to-one interviews and 1 group discussion);</li> <li>-Questionnaires and retrospective reports, used to collect data;</li> <li>-Statistical analysis: use of iterative principal axis factor to identify factors influencing student responses; scores of each task analysed through G-study and through the use of Rasch partial credit model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Almost half the students responded that engaging in group discussion with partners gave them more confidence to speak and to say what they wanted, rather than having to respond to an examiner.</li> <li>-Over half of the students view that group oral task is much more natural situation in which to engage in conversation; that it was an enjoying experience for them</li> </ul>



Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Rea-Dickins, (2001)	-The study investigates teacher assessment in the early years of school for learners with English as an additional language (an extension from a larger study conducted earlier in the year 2000).	-two learners from four classes were targeted to track in detail the assessment experience from the perspective of individual learners;  -two language support teachers; one mainstream classroom teacher	-classroom observations; -interviews with 3 teachers (two language support teachers were interviewed prior to and after they had administered an assessment; class teacher was interviewed aft her lesson observation	-teacher provides students with the 'what' and they 'why' of the assessment; evidence of support and encouragement by the teacher for students to collaborate with one another;  - evidence of teacher scaffolding to push a target learner to achieve the task goal (to produce correct spelling of a word); evidence of learner self-monitoring, peer-monitoring as well as motivation and engagement in an activity; the target learner showed evidence of motivation and persistence on the task which is believed to offer as signs of understanding.

Reference	Research Questions/Foci	Participants	Method (s)	Relevant Findings
Boyle, (1996)	-the study aims to argue that the clause relational analysis developed by Hoey (1983, 1991) and Hoey and Winter (1986) and Jordan (1980) can provide a framework for oral presentations, give them greater cohesion and a method to analyse their effectiveness	-undergraduate students of science studying at the Univeristi Brunei Darussalam	-Introduced the 'Problem-Solution pattern to the students; students apply the algorithm in preparing for the oral presentations	- non native speakers can gain a great deal of confidence as a result of giving successful oral presentations;  -the Jordan algorithm and the 'presentation-signaling relations' can help students to structure presentations effectively and cohesively.



### **2.3.1 Scaffolding in group interactions informed by conversation analysis approach**

Having introduced the concept of scaffolding and the conversation analysis approach, I would like to review the studies that are related to scaffolding and that adopt the CA approach (e.g. Markee, 2000, Mori, 2002 and Stokoe, 2000; Walsh, 2002). Due to the word limit, I decide to discuss two studies, one conducted by Stokoe (2000) and the other by Mori (2002). The reason for choosing Stokoe's work amongst other studies is because of how CA is used in the analysis. Also, the focus of the study is on exploring the group interaction patterns of the students' talk which is in line with the present study. The two themes that Stokoe explored were (1.) the opening sequences of the discussions with particular emphasis on the conversational procedures involved in 'getting down to business' and (2.) episodes marked as of 'off-topic' to investigate the sorts of topics that students treated as legitimate for educational talk. By employing the CA approach, Stokoe was able to examine the sequential organisation of talk and how participants mutually orient to and achieve orderly conversation. Her focus was also on how students orient to each others' turns at talk. From the study, Stokoe uncovers that the process of negotiating topicality often starts with some clarification of the task demands. As mentioned earlier that off-task episodes were explored, Stokoe noted the digression of the students' talk and in reorienting sequence. She found that students voiced the task question, the tutor's words or formulated clarifications of what they 'should' be doing. Hence, I employed the CA approach because from the study by Stokoe, it has suggested that the approach allows me, as an analyst, to focus on aspects of the talk that are relevant to the speakers' concerns. In relation to the concept of collaboration, the focus of Stokoe's study is on how the participants orient to the task and to each others' turns during the discussion which is in line with the focus of the present study (see details in Chapter 4 and 5).

Another study that adopts the CA approach is by Mori (2002). Mori examines the sequential development of talk-in-interaction that was observed in a small group activity in a Japanese language classroom. Each group of students was engaged in a discussion with native speakers who were invited to the class. The study explores the relationship between the task instruction, the students' reaction to the instruction during the pre-task planning and the actual talk with development of the talk with the native speakers. It



was found that in the actual talk, the interaction ended up to be like structured interviews with successions of questions and answers between the students and the native speakers. However, the planning stage of the students (with the focus on the content of discussion by compiling a list of sequence-initiating actions-questions) contributed to a more coherent and natural discussion during the actual talk with the native speakers. That is, the discussion was afforded by the students' production of spontaneous utterances (*ibid*, 2002). With the application of the CA perspectives, the structures of the talk-in-interaction generated by the task design were analysed. The significance of the students' concerns and proposals expressed during the pre-task planning were also explicated through the CA approach.

### **2.3.2 Scaffolding within the ZPD: A Sociocultural perspective in the second language learning classroom**

There are a number of studies that adopt the sociocultural perspective but I have chosen the ones that are particularly relevant to the present study in terms of the theoretical concepts, the aims, methodology, and the findings. I first provide a summary of all the studies that I reviewed in this dissertation followed by detailed discussions.

#### *a) Group interactions and second language learning*

A similar work which supports the idea of co-constructing language learning experiences in the classroom setting is the study by Donato (1994). Following Vygotsky's development theory that learners can provide the same kind of support and guidance for each other like that of when adults provide children, Donato (1996) explored the notion of 'mutual scaffolding' among L2 learners. His purpose was to observe the extent to which three novice French students could positively influence each other, in the development in the foreign language. In his analysis, Donato adopted Wood et al's (1976) features of scaffolding. He also employed the microgenic analysis as it allows researchers to observe how students help each other during an overt planning of L2 utterances and the outcome of these multiple forces of help as they come into contact, and interact with each other. His findings showed that the three French students were capable of providing guided support to their peers during collaboration and scaffolding occurs routinely as students work together on language learning tasks.



The microgenic analysis of activity has also revealed that in the process of peer scaffolding, learners can expand their L2 knowledge and extend the linguistic development of their peers.

Another study which adopts the socio cultural theory framework is the study by Ohta (1995). She focused on the examination of learner-learner interaction, regarding social interaction and SLA as mutually constituting one another with language development in which learners use L2 for meaning-making in a second language classroom interaction. Also taking the perspective of the ZPD, Ohta points out that L2 learner-learner interaction is not simply a place for negotiation of meaning but for collaborative construction of and engagement in activities between novice and expert and these activities constitute learning. Building on Donato (1994) the study examines how scaffolding occurs in a learner-learner pair, specifically inquiring how scaffolding functions in pair activity (role play) with learners with different level of L2 proficiency (in this particular study L2 is Japanese). She finds that there was evidence that a learner with weaker skills can benefit the more advanced learner during the peer collaboration in terms of language development. That is, the more advanced learner had a chance to adjust, refine and experiment with his/her own language through the interaction. From the data, it was also revealed that the learners actively contribute their strengths to help one another through the process of collaborative learning in the ZPD.

In addition, there are studies that utilize a linguistic approach which deal explicitly with the form of what is said, rather than its content. The aim of this approach is focused on the linguistic patterns of talks such as patterns of turn-taking, grammar structures and the IRF structures. There are various studies which are linguistically oriented (e.g. McDonough, 2004; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Varonis and Gass, 1985; and Long, 1983). Due to the word limit, I set out to review one study conducted by McDonough (2004). This is because the study by McDonough is similar to the present study in terms of the context in that it is focused on Thai university students. Moreover, the aim of the study is to explore the instructors' and learners' perceptions about the use of pair and small group activities in the Thai EFL context and also to examine if students provide learning opportunities among themselves in group and pair activities which is similar to the present study.

McDonough (2004) carried out a research at a university in the north of Thailand. The main focus was to investigate if students who actively participated during the pair and small group activities showed improved production of the target forms (e.g. real and unreal conditional clauses). This illustrates that the study is very much linguistically orientated (see summary of the study in Table 2.4).

One of the findings of the study is that students do not perceive group or pair activities to help them improve their grammar. Moreover, the study clearly indicated that the learners' modified output involving the target clauses were 'self-initiated' rather than 'other-initiated'. This portrayed that the students were very independent in reformulating their utterances. Though it was found that Thai EFL learners who had high participation in pair and small group work showed improved production of target forms, the improvement did not occur with the help from other peers during the group/pair activities in this study. This reveals that there is no collective construction of meaning through interaction with others and that there is no joint understanding in completing the task (Littleton and Hakkinen, 1999). As such, they ended up working independently as the students did not consider their peers to be useful resources for learning language. This is a point to make note of that not all group or pair work would promote learning and that the nature of the task needs to be taken into consideration as students might not perceive 'social interactions' to promote or develop their knowledge or learning abilities.

*b) Group interactions in relation to performance on oral academic presentation (OAP)*

Morita's work (2000) focuses on the graduate students' engagement in one type of classroom speech (the oral academic presentation, OAP) and its relationship to students' academic discourse socialization (see 2.2.2a for definition). Hence, the theoretical framework of the study is language socialization. The study examines the processes of how students become proficient participants in the academic activity (OAP).

- The goal is to better understand the discourse socialization of how graduate students negotiate with instructors about their expectations, negotiate with other peers and how they interact and collaborate with the audience during the oral presentation.



-The other goal is to investigate the perceptions of the students towards OAPs through having students review the video and reflect on their presentations, interviewing, and filling in questionnaires.

One important finding of the study suggests that academic discourse socialisation is not a predictable and unidirectional process of knowledge transmission from experts (instructors) to novices (students) but it is a rather complex situation which involves dynamic negotiations of expertise and identities. It was also found that the interactions that occur in the context of graduate seminars are very dynamic in terms of contributions of different knowledge and experiences to the group. Though Morita claims to draw on the language socialisation perspective, but according to the definition stated, I believe it is similar to the socio-cultural perspective in which 'social process' is also valued. Morita also points out that language socialisation is a bidirectional process: that novice members actively seek and structure the assistance of more competent members; as a result, competent members also learn from novices and that it is a lifelong process (2000:282).

One other study that is focused on oral presentations is by Boyle (1996). The study however, focuses mainly on the guidance on how students can use language to shape their work as in oral presentations. Boyle aims to argue that the clause relational analysis, developed by Hoey (1983, 1991; Hoey and Winter 1986; and Jordan, 1980 in Boyle, 1996) can provide a framework for oral presentations as well as giving greater cohesion. The Jordan algorithm was applied to undergraduate students of science at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. The students did a group discussion and to submit outlines to the teacher.

It was found that non native speakers can gain a great deal of confidence as a result of giving successful oral presentations and that Jordan's algorithm (1980 in Boyle, 1996) can help students to structure presentations effectively and cohesively. Similarly, in the present study, the students also had to do a group discussion and they had to come up with a common topic for the presentations. In order to analyse if the students had delivered the presentations effectively in my study, adopting what Boyle did in his study seemed to be the most appropriate because of the similar nature of the tasks with the present study (group discussion followed by oral presentations, see 3.5.4 for detail).

*c) Group discussions and oral presentations in relation to assessment*

When investigating classroom based teaching and learning, it is no doubt that the teacher will have to assess the students one way or the other. Hence, it is crucial that I include studies on the group interactions and the oral presentations in relation to assessments.

I would like to discuss the study by Fulcher (1996) which investigates issues on the use of tasks in oral tests with reference to group discussion and to address the issues surrounding task designs and use which are still perceived to be complex. The study aims to shed light on the selection of tasks for use in oral tests through statistical analysis of the tests and through obtaining views from the students. Forty-seven EFL Cypriot students were asked to attempt three oral tasks (two one-to-one interviews and one group discussion) and findings that are relevant to the present study are as follows:

1. Almost half the students responded that engaging in group discussion with partners gave them more confidence to speak and to say what they wanted, rather than having to respond to an examiner.
2. Over half of the students view that group oral task is much more natural situation in which to engage in conversation and that it was an enjoying experience for them.

One other important study that I would like to discuss is by Rea-Dickins (2001). Her study focuses on the classroom assessment on learners of English as an additional language (EAL). The study traces different stages in the teacher assessment and decision making process and also identifies classroom assessment linked to learning, teaching and bureaucratic functions (see Rea-Dickins, 2000).

Three types of assessments were implemented in the study but due to the word limit, I will discuss only the findings of the 'interactive assessment' with the focus on Stage 2 of the 'Processes and strategies in classroom assessment' model, they are Assessments 2 and 3 below:



1. Assessment 2: Informal: whole class— the focus is on an understanding and use of antonyms; teacher provides students with the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of the assessment; evidence of support and encouragement by the teacher for students to collaborate with one another.
2. Assessment 3: Informal: small group work— the teacher has been working on phonics sounds (e.g. /oo/, /ue/, /oe/, and /ew/) with the pupils; one small group of five EAL learners is working with the teacher to construct words; there were evidence of teacher scaffolding to push a target learner to achieve the task goal (to produce correct spelling of a word); evidence of learner self-monitoring, peer-monitoring as well as motivation and engagement in an activity; the target learner showed evidence of motivation and persistence on the task which is believed to offer as signs of understanding.

To sum up, classroom assessment plays a central role to learning. It can also inform the teacher about how much the learners have understood about what has been learned or still needs learning.

*d) Group interactions in relation to writing tasks*

Other research applies Vygotsky’s concept of zone of proximal development and scaffolding in relation to writing tasks in classrooms. The study by De Guerrero & Villamil (2000) illustrates an interaction of two students engaged in two revision sessions. The pair of students has to revise a composition written by one of them. The purpose of the study is to observe the mechanisms in which the strategies of revision take shape and develop in the interpsychological space created when 2 learners (novice writers in a revision task) are working in their respective ZPDs. The study adopts the microgenetic approach, moment-to-moment changes in the participants’ behaviour are noted, and are used to analyse the interaction by 2 intermediate ESL college students as they worked collaboratively in revising a text. In analysing the interaction, De Guerrero, Maria & Villamil apply Lidz’s (1991) scaffolding framework (see Appendix 2.1). The findings were as follows:

1. It was observed that throughout the interaction was the establishment of intersubjectivity between the learners (the reader and the writer).
2. The task allowed the learners to reorganise knowledge of the L2 instructional and rhetorical aspects and to make knowledge explicit for each other's benefit, basically, the scaffolding was mutual.
3. From the sociocultural perspective, the learners were creatively co-constructing their own system of making meaning through words in an L2.
4. The use of L1 (Spanish) was found throughout the interaction which promoted communication and achievement of the task goal, hence, L1 served as an instrument of task control; L1 was also used to make explicit connections between both languages that might facilitate expression in the L2.

One other relevant study was conducted by Anton and Dicamilla, (1991) in which learners of Spanish who are native speakers of English use L1 in the collaborative interaction and L1 is shown to be an important device in providing each other with scaffolded help. The aim of the study is to examine the social and cognitive functions of L1 use in the collaborative speech of L2 learners who are engaged in a writing task in the L2 classroom. By looking at L1 within the theoretical framework of Vygotskian psycholinguistics the study seeks to demonstrate how L1 is used as a powerful tool as semeotic mediation between learners (at interspsychological planes) and within individuals (at the intrapsychological planes).

Anton and Dicamilla found that within the sociocultural perspective L1 is beneficial for language learning as it acts as critical psychological tool that enables learner to construct effective collaborative dialogue in the completion of the meaning-base language tasks through the 3 functions: construction of scaffolded help, establishment of intersubjectivity, and use of private speech. It was also found that the use of L1 that emerges functions as a means to create a social and cognitive space in which teachers are able to provide each other and themselves with help throughout the task.

In addition, Storch (2000) investigated the performances of three pairs of tertiary ESL students on a writing task by examining for salient linguistic features and patterns of interactions and to examine how collaborative the students are. They are divided into three categories namely: linguistic features, text construction behavior, and metatalk.



The study also examines if there were links between the way the dyads interacted and the quality of the written products (also see Table 2.4). Hence, through examining the pronouns used, Storch concluded that a predominance of the use of first- and second-person singular pronouns indicates non-collaborative orientation while greater use of first-person plural pronouns is collective oriented. It was found that two pairs (dyad 1 and 2) were collaborative while dyad 3 adopted the non-collaborative orientation. Through the text construction behavior it was found that dyad 3 were collaborative throughout the task because there was evidence of co-construction and extension of knowledge. In addition, dyad 2 was also collaborative but only during the editing phase. In terms of the nature of metatalk of the dyads, an initiation of language related episode (LRE) has been most used by dyad 3 when compared to the other two dyads.

*e) Group interactions and idea framing*

Tan (2000) investigated the way ideas are developed and framed in group interaction tasks on British undergraduate programmes for Malaysian students. The study is intended to investigate educational issues concerning knowledge and learning with references to linguistic insights as well as educational principles, hence making the study a more education-oriented linguistic approach rather than a more linguistics-oriented one. In addition, in the analysis, the study explored the data in three dimensions: educational, linguistic and cross-cultural. That is, the linguistic patterns promote in the investigation of how language is used to mediate the process of constructing knowledge. In the educational dimension, the study took into account both the divergent and convergent tasks and to see how this reflects the socio-cultural views of knowledge and truth of the participants. Lastly, the cross-cultural dimension investigated the way knowledge was constructed by two national groups of students (British and Malaysians) and how the differences and similarities between them might reflect the cultural views of knowledge and truth which might have been influenced by their previous socio-cultural educational experiences. Tan (2000) also proposed the taxonomy of idea framing (Appendix 2.2) which was used in the analysis of the students' discourse.

Tan (2000) analysed her data in relation to the three types of talks (cumulative talk, exploratory talk and disputational talk) (Mercer, 1995) but she further introduced in the

idea framing taxonomy which in my opinion, the taxonomy made the analysis more systematic (by introducing the categories and subcategories of additive and reactive framing of ideas). The taxonomy has proved to be effective in one of the assignments that I did as part of the Doctoral programme (see Chapter 3) where I used the taxonomy as a guideline for my analysis. Tan found that there are different directions in which ideas can be generated in relation to previous ideas. She also found that the more as well as the less capable peers play a significant role in triggering each others' ideas.

## **2.4 Summary of relevant insights and gaps in knowledge**

In the preceding sections, I highlighted the insights of research on the 'process' group/paired classroom interactions in general and also research on group interactions in relation to writing tasks (the process and product). In this section, I summarise these insights as well as discuss what I perceive to be the gaps of knowledge that need to be examined.

First, the application of the CA approach in group interaction research has a significant impact on the analytical process as it can explicate how turns and sequences of talks are developed during the discussion and to examine how each participant make their contributions, hence, discovering how talk is constructed. These studies have provided valuable insights but there are still few in number especially in studies which applies the CA approach especially in the Thai context in which the focus is more linguistically oriented (e.g. McDonough, 2004).

The literature on scaffolding has focused either on the process of the group interaction or the product (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). Some studies attempt to relate the group interactions to the writing tasks (Guerrero and Villamil, 2000; Anton and DiCamilla, 1999; Storch, 2000; Walsh, 2002) which are valuable but there are still insufficient research that relates group interactions to one other important skill: the oral performances (e.g. oral presentations) a skill that needs close attention especially in the Thai teaching and learning context because speaking skill still seems to be a major problem for many Thai learners of English.



In addition, literature has put forth frameworks of classroom interactions (see section 2.2.3) but the framework is taken from the adult-child interactions. As such, I hope to depart from the Wood, Bruner and Ross's (1976) scaffolding features and apply the Tan's idea framing taxonomy as I find that it mainly focuses on how ideas are generated amongst the students during the group discussion and in a way it reveals features of scaffolding. Other frameworks discussed earlier are also integrated as I believe it would shed light to the study.

As such, by taking Vygotskian's concept that collaboration leads to learning I hope to provide detailed substance of what is going on during the interaction and to link on to the product, which is the oral presentation in the present study. This is because I perceive that the linguistic approach can show input and output but can not reveal the process of collaboration.

## **2.5 Summary**

Here, I summarise the literature that I have reviewed which cover the research questions or foci, participants, methods and relevant findings. I have also given an overview of the key concepts the present study adopts and laid out the relevant literature in relation to that of my own. I have also differentiated the definitions of 'collaborative' and 'cooperative' learning as I have always thought that the two terms are similar. Finally, I provide a summary of the studies related to group interactions. Several studies focused on group interactions in relation to writing skill while others are focused on the language structure and grammar. The present study, however, focuses on the idea generation hence, investigating how the group interactions might affect the students' oral presentation performances. Thus, providing better understanding for the lecturers of what is going on in the class. In the next chapter, I set out the methodology I used to conduct the investigation.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Design**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter sets out to describe the research design. I first describe the research setting followed by a recap of the research questions. This is followed by discussions of the paradigm of the research. I then explain the rationale underpinning the selection of participants and the choice of research methods and techniques.

#### **3.2 Research Setting and Research Questions**

##### **3.2.1 Research setting**

As mentioned in the introduction, the medium of instruction in universities in Thailand is in Thai language but today, almost all universities set up international programmes where the medium of instruction is in English. The same is with the setting of the current study where the medium of instruction is in English in all the courses. The classroom observations were conducted in the Public Speaking in English course (a course under the Department of Business English). The participants were all Thai students but of different educational backgrounds (see Appendix 3.1). Though the students are Thai, the differences in their educational background had an impact on how they interact with each other (see analysis in Chapters 4-5). The tasks include group discussions, group oral presentations, debates and panel discussions. However, in relation to the research questions the focus of the study is on group discussions and group oral presentations.

##### **3.2.2 Research questions**

Here, I recap the research questions which have guided the design of this study as follows:

1. How are ideas developed and generated in group interaction tasks?
2. In what ways do students collaborate in group discussions?
3. Is there evidence of peer scaffolding in the group discussion tasks?



4. What types of scaffolding do students provide for each other during the group discussion?
5. In what ways is the collaboration related to the oral presentations?
6. What factors during the group discussion do students perceive to hinder or promote the quality of the oral presentations?

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

There are different educational philosophies that a researcher can adopt in data collection procedures but there are two main types that are usually put in juxtaposition. Educational research often distinguishes between the positivist and the interpretive research paradigm (Bassey, 1996, Usher, 1996). Positivists explain their understandings through generalization. The data collected by positivists, therefore, tend to be numerical and suitable for statistical analysis. Thus, the methodology adopted by the positivists would usually be quantitative (Bassey, 1996). On the other hand the interpretive paradigm seeks for deep perspectives and insights of a particular event (Bassey, 1996). Furthermore, the interpretive paradigm provides opportunities and alternatives for individuals to interpret their actions and define their 'reality' as well as to reconsider their existing beliefs and attitudes. The data collected are usually verbal and emphasize field notes and transcripts of conversation (Bassey, 1996). Hence, qualitative methods such as interviews, observations and documents are predominant in this paradigm (Mertens, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) write,

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world invisible. These practices... turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the work. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Similarly Bogdan and Biklen (1998) write that there are five features of qualitative research:

1. Naturalistic: actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument; the researcher goes to the setting under study because they are

concerned with the context.

2. Descriptive data: data comes in the form of words rather than numbers; written word in the reports are very important in the qualitative approach both in recording and disseminating findings.
3. Concern with process: researchers are concerned with the process rather than the outcomes or products.
4. Inductive: theory is grounded in the data; direction of a qualitative researcher who is planning to develop some kind of theory comes after the data has been collected and after spending some time with the subjects
5. Meaning: researchers who adopt this approach are concerned with participant perspectives and making sure that they capture those perspectives accurately.

In the present study, I have adopted the qualitative approach because the aims of the study are to investigate the process of group interaction as to how students construct knowledge together. I am also interested in understanding the different perspectives of the students in relation to collaborative work. In line with the qualitative approach, gathering the data by 'watching' and 'asking' the subjects has helped me to explore in depth the factors that influence the learners' learning development. Moreover, according to Vygotsky (1978:63) he believed that an understanding of human behaviors could not be achieved through reliance on descriptive research alone. In addition, as guided by the research questions, interpretivism seems to be the most appropriate approach to undertake in this study in which interpretation of meanings would be made by both the participants and the researcher. This is because it is insufficient to take into account only my own interpretations because what has been interpreted could be affected by my personal experience. Therefore, thoughts and feelings of the participants should be taken into account through interviewing as Miles and Huberman (1994:) point out, "an interview will be a 'coclaborated' act on the part of both parties not a gathering of information by one party".

Even though qualitative research has its limitation of being subjective, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) argue that all researchers are affected by observers' bias. For instance, questions or questionnaires reflect the interests of those who construct them and so do experimental studies. This means that subjectivity also exists in quantitative research but experimental researchers tend to control for subjectivity and biases with design and



statistics. On the other hand, researchers who adopt the qualitative approach control bias analytically (Lecompte and Preissle, 1993). That is, subjectivity and bias are reduced through a detailed and transparent narrative the researcher writes in order to reveal the complex procedures in dealing with difficulties and the ‘messy’ reality of the scenarios being studied (Holliday, 2000)

In dealing with subjectivity, I did not attempt to eliminate it but rather to minimise subjectivity. Therefore, in this chapter and in the ones that follow I will take the readers through the data collection process where I recorded detailed field notes which include my reflexive accounts. I will unfold my decision making processes, such as the methods that I used, why I was interested in a particular behavior or interactions of the participants, and how I dealt with the difficulties I encountered (Holliday, 2000; Bogdan and Biklen, 1993), in order to make the study transparent to the readers. I will also do that by describing and explaining in detail what I have seen and heard, what it means and why it is significant to me as a researcher (Holliday, 2000: 119). Also, in line with the CA practice, I will also try as far as possible to let the evidences in the data (e.g. transcriptions of the interactions) make the points. In the next section, I discuss the research process and the research methods adopted in the study.

### **3.3.1 Ethnography**

Drawing on the aim in investigating the natural behaviors of the students’ group interactions, to understand how students interact in group discussions, and with the purpose in producing detailed and thick descriptions of the interactions in the classroom context, this study adopts the ethnographic approach. To arrive at ‘thick description’, I have immersed myself in classrooms for three months in conducting this research as Silverman (2000: 11) writes:

Ethnographies are based on observational work in particular settings. The initial thrust in favour of ethnography was anthropological. Anthropologists argue that, if one is really to understand a group of people, one must engage in an extended period of observation.

From the quote above, to ‘understand’ the context of this study is to actually obtain information on what actually goes on during the group discussion and what it means for the students to be engaged in group discussion. This is because field studies can reveal

understanding of humans as they are engaged in action and interaction within the settings (Merriam, 1998). Through observations, I believe that I would be able to record behaviours as they are happening, thus, obtaining first hand information. Also, Merriam suggests that as an outsider, an observer will notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves, things that can lead the observer to understand the context better. What is derived from the observation can also be used as reference points for interviews and stimulated recalls.

The methods that I employed were the extensive participant observation supplemented with field notes diary studies and stimulated recall sessions because in ethnography, thick description is built up by incorporating these strategies (Morse and Richards, 2002; Spradley, 1980; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). From employing the strategies aforementioned, I was able to look at how students interact through non verbal communications and also focused on the language and communicative strategies students utilised in completing the group tasks. As suggested by Holliday (2002) a researcher should also consider several facets that can make up its full social complexity, so in order to produce thick descriptions, I did not take into account only the language features but also considered other facets that influenced the students' interactions and collaborations such as their educational backgrounds, learning experience, and the tasks the students were engaged in. However, due to the scope of the study I could not explore gender and social relationships of the students that might have influenced the group interactions. In the next section, I discuss the research strategy employed in the study. As Stenhouse (1985a, 1985b in Holliday, 2002: 79) mentions that 'thick description' belongs comfortably with the small case study, I discuss how ethnography fits into the case study strategy.

### **3.3.2 Case study research**

There are several types of case studies such as ethnographic, action research, evaluative and intrinsic case studies (Stenhouse, 1985 in Cohen et al, 2000) to name a few. I intend to employ an ethnographic case study approach, as the purpose of the ethnographic research is to produce detailed pictures of events or cultures (Denscombe, 1998:70). This coincides with the objectives of my study in producing thorough



descriptions. As Holliday (2000: 79) asserts 'it is by seeing how connections between people, beliefs, images, traditions operate within a small social setting, that the collective representations of thick description aims to reveal can be seen'. In the present study, a case is an episode of an interaction task. In relation to my interpretive philosophical position, I see that the nature of my study is very much aligned with the case study strategy which frequently follows the interpretive tradition. Moreover, Geertz asserts (1973 in Cohen, 2000: 182), 'case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and 'thick description' of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation'. This also coincides with the research questions of the study which I sought to investigate in-depth the students' perceptions and the process of the interaction.

I also chose the case study strategy because I wanted to focus on specific groups of students involved in group discussions and oral presentations in its natural settings. Hence, this is in line with the phenomena of the case study in that its aims are to understand the case in depth and in its natural setting (Yin, 2003; Punch, 2005; Stake, 1995). In addition, Stake (1995) further divides case studies into *intrinsic* and *instrumental* case studies. With intrinsic case study, a researcher is interested in a particular case while for instrumental case studies a researcher has a research question and feels that there is a need for general understanding and getting insight into the question by studying a particular case (Stake, 1995:3). Stake points out that when a case is instrumental, a researcher may feel the need to choose several case studies rather than one. With the present study, I adopt the 'multiple instrumental' case studies where I seek to get insight into the research questions and to obtain understanding of how ideas are generated and how they collaborate during the group discussion. The use of multiple case studies is so that interpretation would be more compelling. Moreover, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that 'by looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single case finding, as to *how* and *where*, and if possible, *why* it carries on as it does'. For instance, in this particular study, the differences as well as similarities of experiences students bring to the classroom would be taken into account and investigated in relation to 'how' and 'why' the group discussion carried on the way it did. The findings from investigating cases of students involved in classroom interaction tasks would enable me, as a researcher, to examine what Vygotsky (1978) says that in learning, human intelligence originates in our society or culture, and



individual cognitive gain occurs first through interaction with social environment than through internalization.

I believe that studying different groups of students to see the process of their interactions would provide valuable insights into how Thai students collaborate in group discussions. Next, I discuss how I selected my participants followed by the discussion of the types of data collection methods that I employed namely: participant observation, field notes, diary studies and the stimulated recall in detail.

### 3.3.3 Selection of sampling

In terms of selecting the participants, I considered the research questions and as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) I tried to set the *boundaries* as follows:

1. I decided to use my work place as the setting of the study because of my familiarity and because of ease of access in conducting the field work;
2. In connection with the research questions, I decided to focus on students who are enrolled in the Public Speaking in English course because they are highly engaged in group discussion tasks and oral presentations.

The next step was to gain access from the lecturers. Initially, I contacted two lecturers but one of them did not want me to observe in his classes. As I have been in close contact with my other colleague, she agreed to participate. I realise that my previous relationships with my colleague helped me gain access to her classes. The fact that we were friends had a positive effect on the research process because my colleague helped me in gaining the students' cooperation. I observed two groups of four students and one group of three (see student profile in Appendix 3.1). The students came from different educational backgrounds in relation to L2 proficiency: some of them had been exposed to a certain amount of years in English medium of instruction educational contexts while the others have not. However, all the participants are enrolled in the Business English department. The participants consisted of both males and females and were either studying in their third or fourth year. The students have also passed the required basic English courses in order to enroll for Public Speaking course therefore, they are assumed to possess similar level of English proficiencies (in terms of IELTS scores,



they are in the range of 6.0-6.5). I also wanted to involve more than one group of students of the same course (adopting the multiple-case design rather than a single-case design--see section 3.3.2) as what Miles and Huberman (1994: 29) assert, that multiple-case design would add confidence to the findings. It can also strengthen the precision, the validity and the stability of the findings.

I then considered the groups of students to choose in conducting the stimulated recalls. I wanted to include all three groups of students to participate in the interview sessions because I hope to include the perceptions of all the participants, so I first asked them for their time table and the times that they would be available. I told them that I would like to meet them to conduct the focus group interviews within two days after their group discussions and oral presentations. Moreover, an important factor was that the students' free times had to match amongst themselves and also with that of mine. I was able to get only two groups of students to do the stimulated recall as their timetables were really tight. In the next section, I discuss the data collection methods of the study.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

#### 3.4.1 Research Process

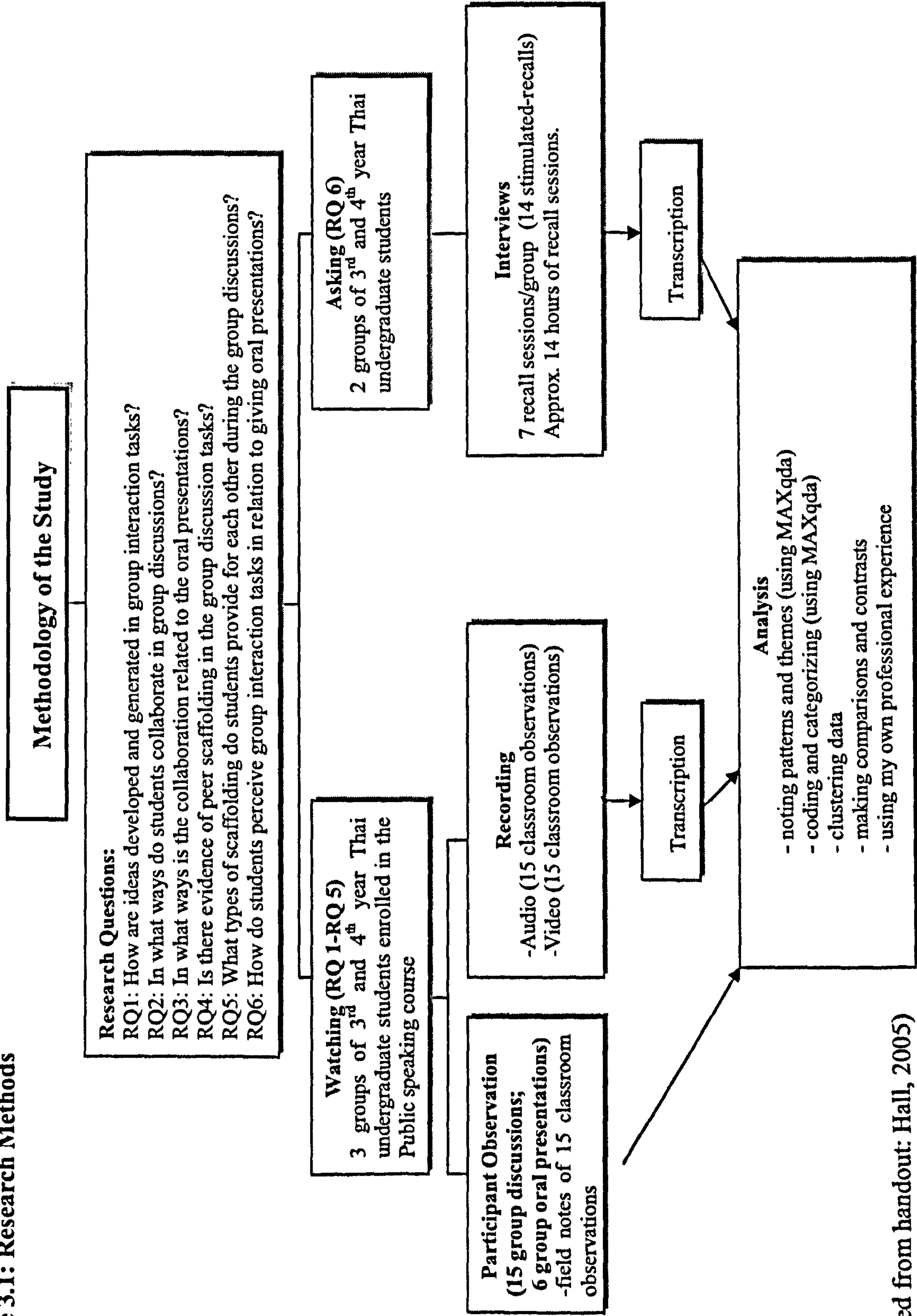
**Table 3.1 Data sources and methods**

<b>Pilot study of stimulated recall and audio recording of group discussions</b>	<b>December, 2004</b>
<b>Approach lecturers before the term starts; inform them of the classroom observations</b>	<b>October, 2005</b>
<b>Participants:</b> Thai undergraduate students studying either in their 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> year in the Business English Department and are enrolled in the Public speaking course 3 groups of students: 2 male and 9 female students engaged in group discussion tasks and delivered group oral presentations <b>Note: Approached the teacher for the observation in September, 2005</b>	
<b>Data collection Methods:</b> Classroom observations. (see Figure 3.1 below) <b>Note: Two groups of students did the stimulated recalls</b>	<b>November, 2005- January, 2006</b>
<b>Data Analysis</b> Transcribing group discussions and group oral presentations (see Figure 3.1 below)	<b>February, 2006- December, 2006</b>

The data collection methods that I employed for this study were: (i) participant observation which included video and audio recording, field notes, (ii) researcher's diaries where I wrote about my personal feelings after the observation and (iii) interviews with students where I used the technique of stimulated recall (Gass and Mackey, 2000). The observations aimed mainly in answering RQ 1-5 and the stimulated recall was implemented to answer RQ 6.



Figure 3.1: Research Methods



(Adapted from handout: Hall, 2005)

### 3.4.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation is an established ethnographic data collection technique (Cohen *et al*, 2000) and since I wanted to obtain as much insight of the students' behaviours during the group discussion, immersing myself in the classroom and observing the participants facilitated the generation of 'thick description' of the event being studied (*ibid*, 2000).

Next I would like to discuss my role as a researcher in which the question of, 'how much I should participate with the students arises. My intention is to be 'involved' with what the students were doing and not being only the 'witness' in the classroom. This is because from my past experience as a student, I recalled that I normally felt more comfortable to have a researcher interact with me. Moreover, as Spradley (1980: 54) asserts, 'participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation'. With these two purposes in mind, I experienced being both insider and outsider simultaneously.

On the first day of my observation apart from taking field notes, I was also acting like a student, I listened to the teacher just like other students and also participated in answering questions. Later on, some of the students asked me a few things that they did not understand during the lecture. I believe the role of being like one of the students and being involved with what the class was doing made me an 'insider'. At the same time, as a 'researcher' I felt that I was an outsider looking at what the students were engaged in. As mentioned earlier, some of the students were already familiar with me so it was not hard for them to approach me whenever they had problems and vice versa, it was not hard for me to engage myself with them. Though there was a risk of going 'native' but to me, being 'native' would allow me to understand what is going on during the group interactions better. As Bogdan and Biklen assert (1998: 35),

since qualitative researchers are interested in how people act and think in their own settings, they attempt to "blend into the woodwork," or to act so the activities that occur in their presence do not differ significantly from those that occur in their absence.



During my observations, I used observation notes, audio and video recording in order to capture the interactions of one group of students (in each class). I employed these three techniques to supplement each other because I believe that the video could capture some of the complexities of learning experiences in which audio recorders could not, such as the non-verbal gestures. Moreover, it can be retrieved any time the researcher wants to see. In my case, I used the video data for my analysis especially when looking at the transcriptions where I can see the students' non-verbal gestures too. Despite its advantages, there are also some disadvantages in using the video camera. That is, having the video recorder present in the classroom could prevent the students from behaving naturally. So I placed the video from the very first session and I did this so that the students can get used to having the video in the class before the actual group discussions were recorded. Another electronic tool that I used for the observation was the digital voice recorder. From the literature that I have reviewed earlier (see Chapter 2), studies on discourse analysis or interactions employed the cassette player/audio cassette as a major tool in collecting the data in order to capture the language used by the participants.

Even though I also took field notes during the observation, a researcher cannot rely on his/her recollections of conversations (Sacks, 1984; Miles and Huberman, 1994). That is, we can summarise what different people said but it is impossible to remember all the details such as pauses and overlaps. Tapes can capture details of the conversation and also can be replayed during the transcription process so that transcripts can be listened to several times and can be improved. When it comes to transcribing the data, it involves listening to recordings repeatedly to look for recurring features of the talk. This was what I did with the pilot study that I conducted in December 2004 (see section 3.4.5b) Hence, I was able to improve my transcripts by listening to the recordings repeatedly and also when analysing the data.

With the advancement in technology, I used the digital voice recorder instead of the cassette tape for the study. From my own experience and from what Keirnan (2004) points out, there are several benefits in using the digital voice recorder:

1. the audio quality of the voice recorder is very clear
2. the data collected can be directly transferred to the computer for editing

3. the digital recorder can record sessions into different directories to keep files organized before uploading them to computer,
4. once the data has been transferred to the computer the speed of the talk can be adjusted and this made it much easier to transcribe the talk.

The audio recorder did prove to be very useful in my case because at first, I plan to use the video for the stimulated recall sessions but I was faced with a problem with the sound which was unclear (as I listened and watched the video after the first observation). As such I used the audio recorder to conduct the stimulated recall instead (see detail in section 3.4.5b). However, where there are advantages in using the voice recorder there are also disadvantages. First is the limited recording time (typically several hours but not enough for the whole day and secondly, the non-verbal gestures can not be captured). The recording time limitation was tackled by transferring the data after each session to my computer and this left me with sufficient recording time. Next is a discussion of why I used field notes as a tool in collecting the data.

### **3.4.3 Field notes**

This section discusses the reasons for using field notes as one of the tools in collecting the data. The main purpose is to supplement/complement with the other two methods that have been discussed earlier. The next question is 'how do I regard field notes?' Mason (2002: 99) suggests three ways a researcher can produce field notes:

1. field notes can be regarded as 'raw data' and can be gradually built up into a data set which can then be analysed, for example, by drawing excerpts from the data for inclusion in the written account.
2. field notes may be regarded as more developmental devices in formulating ones' understanding of the setting, for documenting 'hunches' and for developing and testing ones' analytical ideas. Also, incorporating one's own perceptions, everyday interpretations and experiences.
3. field notes can be regarded as separate from the observations of others



I would also like to add a fourth point in addition to what Mason suggests and that is, writing field notes for reflexive purpose. To me, field notes are developmental devices in formulating my understanding of the setting and for incorporating my own perceptions during the observations. Thus, reflexive account or how I 'communicate with myself' during the observation is included in the field notes as such, taking the readers through the process of how I construct meaning of the students' interactions (example of fieldnotes: Appendix 3.2). For example, I have incorporated my own perceptions, reflections, dilemmas, and emotions in the field notes as they were useful in the analysis stage because in the field work that I conducted for one of my doctoral assignments, my field notes included my reflexive account and it proved to be very fruitful in my data analysis where the account has been triangulated with other sources of data (quantitative data and transcripts from the voice recorder (Sundrarajun, 2005)). Thus, combining different data sets helps in enhancing the validity of the study (Silverman, 2000; see section 3.8 for detail). The next section is a discussion of the researcher's diary study.

#### **3.4.4 Researcher's Diary**

As mentioned in the previous section, I wrote the field notes 'in the situation' but I also thought that it should be useful to reflect a few hours after the observation. In Nunan (1989:55 citing Bailey, 1989) a diary means 'a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented thought regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events'. Nunan further explains that diaries can be employed to monitor either the learning process or the teaching process or both. In the current study, I have used the diary not to monitor any teaching or learning process but as a researcher, the diary study helped to monitor my research process. Therefore, I wrote summary notes after each observation (Yin, 2005). The purpose of writing the diary was to reflect on the research process and also how I felt, what difficulties I had on that particular day and other personal feelings. I wanted to use the diary as an on-going record for the purpose of continuity from what has been recorded in the field notes. For instance, during the first few observations, I felt really anxious whenever I went to the class and there were many times that the students came to class late. I always thought, 'what will I do if the students do not show

up?’ and I would always pray that all my subjects show up. Moreover, there was once when I forgot to bring along the tripod for the video to class so I had to place the video on the table. I had to fiddle around with the video recorder for quite some time before I could get the appropriate angle and to capture all the students. This shows that researchers are not laboratory technicians (Carr, 1995: 87-99) and that in ‘field work’ anything can go wrong. At first, I felt very anxious every time I did an observation, afraid that things will go wrong. Through writing the diary, and afterwards when reading through it, I realised that my feelings changed as the days passed by, I also became more positive and started to enjoy myself. In terms of reflexivity I notice that in the diary I focused more on my personal feelings. Hence, the diary allowed me to pull out what I actually felt deep inside which I believe adds additional details to the reflexive account which was written *in situ*. One other procedure that I undertook as part of the study in order to answer RQ 6 was the stimulated recall sessions which are discussed in the next two sections.

### 3.4.5 Procedures of the stimulated recall

#### *a) Stimulated Recall*

Stimulated recall was carried out mainly to answer RQ 6: What factors do students perceive to promote or hinder the quality of the oral presentations? According to Calderhead (1981:121) and Lyle, (2003:861), stimulated recall involves the use of audiotapes or videotapes of behaviours (e.g. what the students said or did) which are used to aid the participants’ memory in recalling their thought processes at the time of those behaviours. Calderhead (*ibid*) writes:

it is assumed that the cues provided by the audiotape or videotape will enable the participant to ‘relive’ the episode to the extent of being able to provide, in retrospect, an accurate verbalized account of his original thought processes, provided that all the relevant ideas which inform an episode are accessible.

Thus, the stimulus allowed the students to relive again the interaction that was taking place during the group discussion. I perceive the stimulated recall technique to be important for the present study because the stimulus (in this case, cues provided from



audio recorded data<sup>3</sup> ) served as a memory aid. Gass and Mackey (2000) also support that some visual or aural reminder of an event will stimulate recall of the mental processes in operation during the event itself. Gass and Mackey (2000) adds a more specific use of stimulated recall that 1) it can help to identify the type of knowledge a learner uses when trying to solve particular communicative problems or when making linguistic choices, 2) it can help determine if the knowledge is being organised in specific ways and 3) it can help determine when and if particular cognitive process such as retrieval or decision making are being employed. In this study, the introspection was used to uncover the students' perspectives towards group interaction tasks and to reflect on their thoughts after they have carried out the tasks. While hearing the stimuli, the learners were asked to recall their thought processes during the original event. After each session, I made arrangements with each group of students to conduct the stimulated recall in one of my colleague's private office.

I used two focus groups for the stimulated recall sessions for the following reasons:

- It saves time
- Data are generated by interaction between group participants, that is, not only their views are elicited but they also hear from others (Punch, 2004).
- The focus group presents a more natural environment, which I believe is suitable with Thai students. From my experience and cultural knowledge, Thai students tend to be intimidated by the presence of a teacher. Since they knew I was a teacher at the university, a one-to-one interview would have been uncomfortable for them and would result in much less cooperation.

The sessions were conducted one or two days after the observation of the group discussions and oral presentations. Prior to the stimulated recall, I viewed the tape and made notes of the behaviors and curiosities that I had. During the recall session, I asked the students to recount mainly 1) what had been going on in their minds at that time and why they behaved or said the way they did during the interaction, 2) whether the discussions helped them in anyway in their performances of their presentations and why or why not. During the recall session anyone of us could stop the tape at any time to discuss any issues that were raised.

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<sup>3</sup> The classroom observations were carried out by both video and audio recording. However, I used audio recording for the stimulated recall because the quality of the sound was better.

### *b) Pilot of the stimulated recall*

The stimulated recall procedure is said to be generally complex so it is necessary that I conduct a pilot study. Prior to conducting the main study, I went back to Thailand before the term ends and the students were doing their last group tasks. One of my colleagues was able to get one group of students (4 Thai students) for me to do a pilot for the stimulated recall. This pilot enabled me to familiarise myself with the procedures and also to see the reactions of the Thai students. First, I talked to the students in order to make them feel at ease. After I set up the laptop, I gave them the instructions (Appendix 3.3) then I asked the students to listen to the discussions (which had been transferred from the audio recorder into the laptop). Originally, I wanted the students to view the video but I found that the quality of the sounds were unclear so I had to ask the students to do the recall from what I recorded in the audio recorder. I then modeled the procedure to them. At first, the students did not really understand what they had to say so they tend to be silent and I was not able to elicit many responses from them. From the pilot study, I learned that:

- I have to have a set of general questions: “ What were you thinking here or at this point” or “ Can you tell me what you were thinking” so that when I stop certain segments, I can ask those general questions as suggested by Gass and Mackey (2000)
- If the students stop certain segments, I must listen and should not give concrete reactions to the participants but rather to backchannels for example: *oh, hmm, I see, ok* (Gass and Mackey, 2000)
- I have to be careful not to ‘fish’ for answers.

During the pilot, the students hardly stopped any segments to comment, hence most of the time, I was the one who stopped the segments. This was what I have anticipated because it is not the nature of Thai students to make comments unless asked by the teacher. This was one difficulty I faced when conducting the main study. As such, what I did was I told the students repeatedly that they could stop the video any time they wanted and one or two students attempted to initiate a few small comments.



Since the pilot revealed that the sounds from the video were unclear I had two choices in mind when conducting the main study which were: 1. to find a way to improve the sound quality of the video and then do the recall or 2. to stick to the audio recorder for the recall. Since my original plan was to do the recall from the video, I felt I wanted to give another try so I bought an external microphone and tested once again in a class then I watched the video immediately. Unfortunately, the sounds were still unclear so I eventually used the audio recorder to do the recall for the present study. Next, I discuss the limitations of the stimulated recall method.

*c) Limitations of stimulated recall method*

Nisbett and Wilson (1977: 231) argued that in using verbal reports their participants provide inaccurate reasons for their thoughts. They further claim that ‘there may be little or no direct introspective access to higher order cognitive processes. However, Nisbett and Wilson’s statements lack some precision in the time lag in which I would agree with them if the recall is conducted several days after the actual event. As Ericsson and Simon (1987) counter argued that the information in memory structures by stimulated recall can still be accessed where there is immediate or little or no gap in the length of time between the event and the recall. However, Bloom, Cohen and others (cited in Gass & Mackey, 2000) point out that the majority of loss of memory loss may occur shortly after the event, so delays of 3 hours to 3 days may result in similar data.

In addition, Ericsson and Simon (1980 cited in Gass & Mackey, 2000) further emphasised that there is a need to assure that verbal reports are elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the circumstances in which they were obtained. The researcher has to be extremely cautious about what and how the questions are being asked so that valuable and reliable information would be obtained. In response to this, I used the guidelines suggested by Gass and Mackey when conducting the recalls (see Appendix 3.3).

### **3.5 Conduct of Analysis**

#### **3.5.1 Data analysis framework**

In this study, the data consisted of (i) participants' words and actions captured on the video and voice recorders and through field notes (for group interactions and oral presentations) and (ii) the stimulated recall sessions were aided by the audio recorder. Additional data was in the form of diaries. There were altogether 7 classroom observations (5 group interactions and 2 oral presentations for each group of students). These included three groups of students (approximately 45 minutes each for the interaction and 12-15 minutes per group for the oral presentations). The stimulated recalls however, were conducted on two groups of students (8 students; conducted approximately 1 hr./session). The data were analysed by using the analytical frameworks as discussed below.

#### **3.5.2 Transcribing, translating data and transcription conventions**

Before going on to the analysis framework, I would like to discuss the decision-making process that I made during the transcription process. First, I decided on the transcription conventions which I based on the Atkinson and Heritage transcription conventions because I found it to be the most comprehensible (1984 in Wooffit, 2001: 62) as a model and adapted some of the transcription symbols (see laminated sheet). As the students' discussions were both in English and in Thai (this also applies to the stimulated recalls) the data that were in Thai was translated into English by myself. Then I asked a colleague who teaches translation courses and also works as a translator to help check my translations for accuracy (see Appendix 3.4, example from a group interaction).

In order to analyse the data, I felt I needed to understand what was going on during the group discussions thoroughly, hence, I transcribed all the data. I then read all the data and listened to the audio tape several times. In qualitative study, a researcher has to be selective so first I organized my data chronologically (noted the dates and the sessions). I then divided the group discussions into episodes by assigning titles. During the course of dividing the episodes, I also made initial decisions in selecting the episodes to be



presented in the dissertation by considering the ones that are relevant. By relevant, I mean the data that are in line with Swain's definition (2000) in which Swain suggests that collaborative dialogues are dialogues that are 'knowledge building' or where language learning seemed to co-occur (e.g. ones that demonstrate contributions to the group; scaffolding one another such as language problems).

### 3.5.3 Application of conversation analysis and idea framing taxonomy

The analysis of the present study focuses on the educational setting and employs the conversation analytic methodology, similar to that of Stokoe (2000; also see literature review section for detail). The Conversation Analysis (CA) approach was applied because I regard the naturally occurring group discussion as the primary data, just like CA practitioners. The purpose of CA transcription is to make clear *what* is said and *how* it is said for analytic consideration and most importantly, transcriptions are evidences that are used to communicate to the audience. Hence, I used the group discussion transcripts to communicate with the audience. I examined thoroughly how knowledge and ideas are generated and how students respond to one another by looking at the interdependency of turns and how they contribute to the discussions. Below is an example from Excerpt 4.9 (Chapter 4, p. 85) of how I applied the approach.

<p>137Pat: =there's new discovery every year so=  138Robert: =so you guys really think we should do this?=  139Pat: I'm kinda like in between (.) actually  140Robert: we can't do this unless you wanna talk  141Andy: =no no no(.) I think this one has a lot of information=  142Tom: =I think this one is more difficult= ((pointing))  144A: right (.) more information here (.) this actually good because has a lot of argument  144Robert: so you need to know if it's question of facts, values //or //  145Pat: //fact (.) fact//  146Tom: =yes or no=  147Pat: =true or false= (.) ok (.) UFO then</p>
---

The overlaps (turns 137-138; 141-142; 146-147) and the latches (turns 144-145) are features of naturally occurring conversation. Thus, in analysing the discussion, I took into account the latches and overlaps to examine how the students co-construct the

discourse and how the discussion progresses (see Chapters 4-5 for analysis).

Moreover, Tan's framing of idea framework (2000) was applied in analysing how students scaffold because several studies (e.g. Donato, 1994; Wood and Wood, 1996; Ohta, 1995) relied greatly on the scaffolding features derived from Bruner *et al*, 1976). Since I applied Tan's Idea Framing Taxonomy in analysing my data for one of the Doctoral assignments (Sundrarajun, 2005), I found that some features of the taxonomy can be employed in analysing classroom group interactions. However, Tan's framework tends to be rigid which further adaptation was required. Hence, I used both CA and Tan's idea framing taxonomy to complement one another as I aim to focus on the language and the content in my analysis. Moreover, CA is flexible which allows me to understand better how interactions develop.

### **3.5.4 Analysis of the Oral Presentations**

The transcripts of the students' formal speech were transcribed and were categorised based on Boyle's (1996) 'presentation-signaling relations' (e.g. lexical signals, lexical repetitions and parallelism; also see Appendix 2.5) rather than on Jordan's algorithm. This is because the algorithm is based particularly on the 'Problem-Solution pattern which does not match with the type of speech the students had to do in the present study. This was then linked back to the analysis of the group interactions as to how collaboration has helped them in mastering the use of language in giving formal oral presentations.

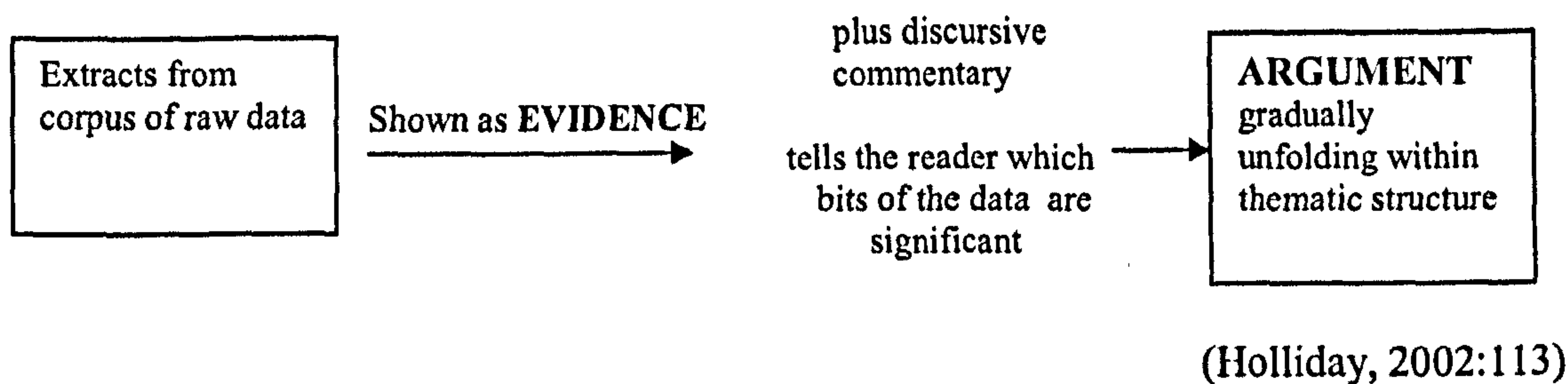
## **3.6 Generating and confirming findings**

### **3.6.1 Generating findings**

The data for the analysis include 1) the group discussion, 2) the stimulated recall (focus group) and 3) the oral presentations. In generating the findings, I first examined the raw data and then looked for evidence to answer my questions as well as to support my argument (see Figure 1 below):



**Figure 3.2: Using Data to Support Argument**



In analysing the first data set I drew on some of the analysis process suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) as follows:

### 1. Coding

When coding the data, I looked at threads that tie together bits of data by examining the recurring patterns and behaviors. That is, the recurring phrases during the interactions that emerged are linked back to the research questions in which one of the questions was to look for evidence of scaffolding, co-construction of ideas and the language features. I also relate them to Mercer's classification of group work (cumulative, exploratory, and disputational talk (Mercer, 2000) as well as to Tan's framework of idea taxonomy (2000). The process in coding the data involves examining for patterns, topics and the key variables of the study. What I did was I started off with the variables and topics in the research questions (e.g. evidences of scaffolding). I also used the frameworks discussed earlier in Chapter 2 as guidelines particularly the framework introduced by Tan (2000). For instance, I applied Tan's framework in categorising the scaffolding evidences such as when the students employed certain interactional strategies (e.g. when students contribute specific ideas to the discussion, I would put that under 'expanding').

### 2. Making contrast and comparisons

Having a number of groups under investigation enabled me to make a 'cross-case comparative analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; see section 3.4.3). As I have observed 3 group interactions, I was able to compare and contrast the similarities and differences amongst the groups.

In addition, since subjectivity is inherent in qualitative research (Holliday, 2002), in order to verify the analysis I also used a number of tactics:

### 3. Triangulation of analysts

I have asked a colleague with L2 teaching background to be my second analyst for the purpose of the validity of my analysis and of the results of my study. I submitted to my second analyst samples of data which she coded and interpreted (see Appendix 3.5 for example). I also showed samples of data analysis and discussed my analysis with my supervisor. This colleague have also taken a look at several of my data sets, hence she is familiar with my work.

### 4. Confirmatory tactics through interviews

I considered the students' perspectives of the group interaction to check with that of my own interpretations of the data. The stimulated recall also helped in tapping into how the students felt and thought which allowed me as a researcher to be able to obtain information which could not be obtained through observations.

### 5. Use of reflexive account as supporting evidence to the patterns generated by coding

As I have mentioned in sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3, I have employed the techniques of the researcher's diary and field notes which enabled me to provide my reflexive accounts, hence also taking my own background into account as Holliday (2002) points out that 'individual construction' is necessary. This has helped me to increase my awareness of the researched data. In line with what Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:6) write: 'research must be carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the setting'. Reflexive account also enabled me to show sensitivity to the interpretations and voices in my own data. This is what makes qualitative writing different from quantitative writing in which there is an interactive process where a researcher makes reflexive sense of one's own presence and role in the research. Hence, I made use of the reflexive accounts of my experience, thoughts and feelings as evidence and to support certain arguments in my analysis for example, when I wanted to justify why I was interested in a particular issue or matter and not the other. My reflexive accounts also served as an additional perspective to the coding process. While interpreting the data, my experience and my theoretical knowledge on issues of collaborative learning helped me to understand the discussion better. For example, 'questionings' seemed to be one of the most common strategies employed by the students.



### **3.6.2 MaxQDA Programme**

I then used the MaxQDA analysis programme in coding the transcripts of the data. The process generally involves examining the data for the topics and issues by drawing on ideas from the literature and the research questions. Words and phrases were then assigned to relevant excerpts and were clustered together under headings. It is no doubt that the coding process is not a straight forward process in that I had to refer back to the data and the 'codes' now and then. Nevertheless, the software helped me in examining the common themes and patterns more efficiently because it offers features which allow establishments of linkages of codes and text segments (Kelle, 1997). The program also contain features that allow the researcher to write short comments on the data ('memos') and to link these memos either to text segments, codes or to other memos (see Appendix 3.6).

In analysing the stimulated recall, MaxQDA software is also employed to find the commonalities as well as differences of the themes and patterns of the responses and then compared them where relevant. Again, with the use of the research questions as guidance, the focus was on the perceptions of the group work in relation to the oral presentations. Hence, the students' responses were then analysed and linked back to the information that has been derived from the analysis of the group interactions. For example, whether there were evidences of co-construction of ideas and if the students did perceive that to help in shaping their oral presentations.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

According to Silverman (2000: 200), when studying people's behaviors or asking them questions, not only the values of the researcher but also the researcher's responsibilities to those being studied have to be faced. That is, a researcher should respect the rights, interests, sensitivities, and privacy of their informants and to avoid causing stress or feeling of intrusion of any kind (BAAL 1994: Section 6.1). Due to the nature of my study, it was a long-term engagement with the participants while collecting the data and there were several ethical issues that were considered.

Starting from gaining access to the classes, in the beginning, two teachers agreed to allow me to observe the class. However, I approached them again in October, 2005 in order to confirm the procedures of the fieldwork. I told them that I will use the voice and video recorders. Knowing that I would use the video recorder, one teacher did not agree to have me in his class. As such I was left with only one teacher. Prior to approaching the teacher and the students again, I wrote a letter asking for permission from the Chairperson of the Department of Business English, to conduct my study (as the course is under the Department of Business English and it is important to inform the Chairperson of the process of the research) (see BERA, 2004). After getting the Chairperson's permission, I then informed the teacher of my purpose of the study and also requested her to inform the students in advance of the field work that I will be conducting. I then made arrangements with the teacher to meet with the students to ask for volunteers. I had to contact the teacher during the holiday in October, 2005 so that I can meet the students in the first week of the second term (November, 2005). I then informed the students of the following points:

- the details of the purpose of the study (that I am a Doctoral student at the University of Bristol and the field work is part of my dissertation)
- that the tools I will use include the digital recorder and video recorder and that I will be observing in their classes through out the term
- that I need volunteers to participate in my study
- that there are consent forms for them to sign prior to the actual observations and prior to the stimulated recall sessions (for both the group interaction tasks and the recalls)
- the results and whatever has been recorded will not affect their grades in any way (Thai students are very much concerned with their grades therefore, this point should be made clear to them).

Finally, I obtained informed consent by including all information on confidentiality, anonymity and data security (see Appendix 3.7). Originally, as discussed with my supervisor, I aim to observe five groups for the study but now since I am left with one teacher and she was teaching only 3 sections of the Public speaking course, I now have only three groups to conduct my study<sup>4</sup> (as it makes more sense to observe one group

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the sufficient number of knowledge-building episodes in the data, and the detailed case study



per class). I then made arrangements with the teacher to visit the three classes. First, the students were asked to get into groups of 3-4 then I requested for volunteers (one group from each class). I did not have any difficulties getting volunteers because some of the students used to study with me (when I was still teaching at the university a few years ago). They were willing to participate in my study. In my opinion, 'willingness' of the participants is an important factor in contributing to the success of the study as I believe this would reduce the possibility of the participants to drop out in the middle of the data collection.

Next, I discuss briefly the ethical dilemma that I have encountered. The ethical dilemma occurred during the data analysis stage especially the data from the recall in which some of the information mentioned by the students about the course and of the teacher could be 'unfavorable'<sup>5</sup>. Though the names are anonymous, I decided not to report 'sensitive' or unfavourable issues. The other issue was when one of the teachers decided not to allow me to observe his class. I was not sure if I should persuade him to participate, however, I realised that since he was not willing to participate, I should respect his decision.

### **3.8 Transparency of the Study**

In terms of transparency, several issues were taken into account in terms of the procedures and the analysis. In terms of the procedures, as discussed in section 4 and section 7.2, I was aware that the presence of the observer, the video and the voice recorders could have an affect on the participants' behaviours in that they might not behave naturally and this could be an obstacle. I tried to minimise the effect by introducing the instruments into the classroom right from the first day of the data collection. As for the validity of the stimulated recall, I did the recall either on the same day or one day after each group discussion and after each oral presentation in order to minimise the amount of intervening time between the event and the recall. In addition, with the use of different research methods (e.g. diary, fieldnotes, observations, and stimulated recall) the data has been triangulated to improve the clarity and precision of

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approach, the smaller than the intended number of groups was not a problem.

<sup>5</sup> There were a couple of occasions in which the students made negative comments about the teacher which I felt was more of 'personal' issues, so I decided not to report on those comments made by the students.

the findings of the study (Punch, 2003).

In terms of the analysis and the interpretation of the data as mentioned in section 3.6, I asked a colleague to be an inter-rater in which multi perspectives and meaningful analysis were obtained. Assistance from another researcher when I experienced any difficulties especially in coding helps to refine the definitions of the codes as Miles and Huberman (1984: 63) suggest that disagreement between researchers shows that the definition has to be amended. In conclusion, I sought to produce thick and narrative descriptions of the data analysis by taking the readers through the process of data collection, observations, diary studies and reflexive accounts in hope to gain validity.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Scaffolding in Action**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I gave an overview of the study's research design and outlined the methodology. In this chapter I present a detailed narrative analysis<sup>6</sup> of one case under investigation (I will call Case 1). I present Case 1 in a detailed narrative description since in this particular group discussion, the students seem to be vigorous in terms of the progression of ideas, starting from how they choose the topics until how they finally come to an agreement on a topic. The students scaffolded one another effectively as there were evidences of the four main scaffolding features (refer to 2.2.1b) throughout the discussion. Another reason is that the students in this particular case used mostly L2 (English) which rarely occurs in the classroom so it is worth investigating in detail. The analysis aims at investigating the following research questions:

RQ1: How are ideas developed and generated in group interaction tasks?

RQ2: In what ways do students collaborate in group discussions?

RQ3: Is there evidence of peer scaffolding in the group discussion tasks?

RQ4: What types of scaffolding do students provide for each other during the group discussion?

#### **4.2 Background of case 1:**

Case 1 is composed of students who are all studying in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. They are enrolled in the Public Speaking in English course as one of their major requirement. The students who are enrolled in this course have passed the four compulsory required English courses before being able to take the course, hence they possess an upper intermediate level of English proficiency and in terms of IELTS scores, they are

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<sup>6</sup> What I mean by narrative is I look at the episode as a whole. This is because 'narrative' is like story telling and I chose to tell the whole 'story' of what happens in the discussion of Case 1, Discussion # 4 and also took it as a follow through connection to the oral presentations.

considered to be in the range of 6.0-6.5<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the students' educational backgrounds can be divided into two types as follows:

1. Students who have been educated in the Thai educational system and have never been exposed to any English speaking medium of instruction;
2. Students who have been exposed to English speaking medium of instruction (e.g. studied in English speaking countries or at international schools in Thailand).

Case 1 involves students of the second type. There are three male and one female student and all four students come from international schools where the medium of instruction is English. Therefore, the interaction took place in English with little code switching. In this particular task, the students are working on the persuasive speech task. They are deciding on a topic for the oral presentation. In the discussion, the students are suggesting ideas and brainstorming on the topics. In this section I analyse the group interaction in order to explore the types of verbal strategies students used while carrying out a goal-directed group discussion.

#### **4.3 Background of the group discussion tasks**

In the Public Speaking course, the main objectives are to enable students to work successfully as a team and to be able to organise ideas into a coherently structured presentations. The students had to give two group oral presentations: (i) group informative speech (IS) and (ii). group persuasive speech (PS). They are required to work in groups of 3-5 and to decide on topics, to work collaboratively and submit outlines and then to give the presentations. Prior to each group discussion, the teacher gives lectures on topics such as, 'selecting a topic', organizing the body of the speech', and 'speaking to inform' and so on (following the chapters in the text book). After each lecture, the students are to work on the group task assigned by the lecturer (e.g. selecting a topic; organising the main points and produce outlines). I have provided the

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<sup>7</sup> The four compulsory English courses incorporate the four skills and students take at least two years to complete all four courses. Students are required to get at least a "C" grade to pass each English course. According to the Department of English of the university, if students pass all four English courses, they would be considered to have an equivalent of English proficiency level of 6.0-6.5 in terms of IELTS scores.



instructions for each group task in Appendix 4.1).

Next, I present the first case (Case 1) that I selected to analyse in detail. The transcripts discussed below are taken from the fourth group discussion session where the students are working on the persuasive speech task. Data are referenced by students' names, number of discussion and its purpose, (e.g. Discussion 4, persuasive speech #1)<sup>8</sup>. Hence, I take you through each episode starting from (i) how one student initiates the discussion, then (ii) how the students scaffold and develop more ideas and (iii) how students eventually come to an agreement on a common topic 'UFOs'.

4.3.1 'Taking leadership'

Below is the transcript of the first episode of the group discussion. In this episode the students are trying to come up with a topic for the oral presentation and one student suggests the topic on UFOs. In the discussion that follows the transcript I will show how one student (Robert) takes the role of the discussion leader and scaffolds his peers in various ways until the goal is achieved. The reason that I have selected this excerpt is because it seems to have a beginning, elaboration, and a closure. I present this particular excerpt in a two move format in order to highlight my analysis on Robert's role in the discussion (adapted from Leung and Mohan, 2004:345).

Excerpt 4.1 Episode: I suggest UFOs

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions	Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
1. Robert: ok (.) ok	INI	2. Tom: topic (.) topic	INI
3. Robert: can I have some candies (.) ok (.) so let's come up with topic (.) oh (.) I have two topics (.) abortion and prostitution (.) you guys come up with topics	INI	4. Pat: we have to choose according to question of facts, values or policy (.)	DIV

<sup>8</sup> The discussion number and task type are specified for my own reference throughout the dissertation

5. Robert: =no (.) just come up with a speech (.) persuasive speech first then we say which one it's gonna be then=	CONTRA	6. Pat: =ok (.) ok=	ACC
		7. Tom: UFO	RESP
		8. Andy: I don't know anything about UFO	RESP
9. Robert: we can talk about AREA 51 right?	ADD	10. Andy: what AREA 51, what is it?	QUES
11. Robert: have you heard of Area 51 like in America (.) they say that in the dessert where they say where they like you know (.) they've seen aliens and UFOs	EXPD	12. Tom: the Triangle Bermuda (.) they call Bermuda	ADD
13. Robert: ok (.) so UFO for one (.) UFO slash aliens (.) so do you guys think (.) do you guys think it exists (.) UFO (.) aliens?	QUES	14. Pat: I mean (.) I don't think (.) it exists	RESP
		15. Andy: I think they exist	RESP
16. Robert: ok (.) so we can pick UFO as one of the topics (.) doesn't mean we have to use it (.) and they DO exist (.) later we have to write a statement	Accel.Disc.	17. Pat: how about abortion and prostitution (.) like (.) we can do that	QUES
18. Robert: =no, no no that (.) I was just joking around=	EXPLA	19. Pat: =so UFO=	RESP
20. Robert: =UFO is fun (.) c'mon=	ADD		

(Case 1, Discussion #4)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For the sake of anonymity I use pseudonyms to refer to students.



My main aim in analysing the above interaction is to show that although the conversation is carried out by students who may have divergent interests, they share a common goal which is coming up with a topic and thus, they direct themselves towards it. In the analysis I will try to explore the types of scaffolding they use and how they use it in order to accomplish their common goal.

Turn taking, which occurs in social conversation, begins here when Robert initiates the first move, 'calling for attention' ('ok, ok', turn 1). A second student then contributes by reminding the others of the goal of their discussion ('topic, topic', turn 2). As there is no verbal response yet from the rest of the group members in turn 3, Robert seems to take the leadership of the discussion by making the first contribution of an idea (".... Prostitution..."), and at the same time suggesting that the discussion should be collaborative which is indicated as, '*you guys come up with ideas*'. Even though, it soon (turn 18) appears that Robert was joking when suggesting those topics, it is not clear whether or not the other members of the group understood the joke (Later, it becomes clear that one of them – Pat, took Robert literally). Nevertheless, the effect of Robert's last statement is not of a controlling and managing participant, but rather as an accelerator of the discussion. By saying, *You guys...* he in fact allocates the next turn to the others. Pat then contradicts Robert, saying that "*no (.) we have to choose according to question of facts, values or policy*", contradicting in this case, leads to scaffolding as it triggers Robert to justify why he disagrees. Also, Robert conforms to the metaphor of scaffolding in orienting towards the task goal (see 2.2.1b). So Robert makes his second contribution, aiming at moving the discussion forward in turn 5, "*no (.) just come up with a speech (.) persuasive speech first then we say which one it's gonna be then*". Robert is suggesting that they come up with the topic and only then relate it to the theory as taught by the teacher (facts, values or policy; see Appendix 4.1; Group task 2) would be more practical. Hence, right from the beginning, Robert appears to take the leading role and scaffolding the discussion by suggesting additional aspect to the topic and when a group member does not understand what it is, he tries to explain and expand. Andy, also scaffolds by asking a genuine question and Robert also scaffolds by asking for others' agreement and opinions and collaborating them in his decision. Pat agrees (turn 6) and her consent seems to give green light to another member of the group. It is apparent that the students are involved in what Fisher (1993:255) calls,



“joint consciousness” in which two or more minds are collaborating in the discussion.

Robert appears to know the right direction of the discussion which should stem from the topic rather than from the categories (e.g. question of facts, policy, or values). His determination proves to be right because it seems that starting from the topic is much more motivating and much more natural for an informal conversation and seems to scaffold the discussion. Robert directs the discussion into one which is similar to conversation outside the classroom, where the conversation is led by topics rather than by categories. The more natural the discussion, the more likely that the group will reach its aim. Robert's conversational strategy proved to be effective because in turn 7, a new member of the group joins in and suggests a topic UFO. This leads to the fourth member of the group (Andy) to initiate a statement (turn 8): *“I don't know anything about UFO”*. At this point, it seems like the conversation cycle could have ended. However, using a scaffolding move, (turn 9 Robert: *we can talk about AREA 51 right?*) Robert opens up the conversation circle by expanding on the previous idea and suggesting a more focused topic which is related to UFOs and which stimulates the curiosity of Andy.

Even though it seems that Robert is not very clear in explaining what Area 51 is, it appears that by mentioning UFOs and aliens he has triggered the discussion to evolve. Interestingly, when Tom sees that Robert is struggling, in turn 12, he adds a remark about *“Triangle Bermuda”*, which is thematically connected but might confuse the participants. Although it looks like at this stage of the discussion, group members add on to one another's ideas and not rely on just one particular person to do all the explanations, it turns out that Robert, who seems to have established his self/group-nominated role as a leader and a scaffolder of the discussion, ignores Tom's contribution. Then in turn 13, Robert concluding that the topic on UFO/aliens are to be listed as one of the potential topics that they will choose, once again, demonstrating a role in regulating how the task should proceed.

Interestingly, Robert again triggers the conversation to go on by asking for the others in the group whether they think UFOs exist, triggering the other group members to think. Two of the group members responded with two different beliefs about UFOs in which (turn 14) Pat does not believe there is such a thing as UFOs while Andy (turn 15) thinks



UFOs exist. In relation to the responses, it appears that Robert now knows what the group members think about the topic (that is, two other group members believe in UFO hence, they are likely to go for the topic) then confirms his intention to keep UFOs as one of the topics for the presentation. However, he emphasizes "*doesn't mean we have to use it*" (turn 16), here I perceive Robert to empathize with Pat in that she does not believe in UFOs so the fact that he said the group does not have to necessarily pick the topic means he still respects Pat's opinion. This also made me think of the nature of Thai social interaction: people normally empathise with other people's feelings and again, Robert gives importance to what other group members feel about the topic and not just that of his own. Repetition seems to play an important role here.

In Turn 17, Pat diverges the group's consensus, and takes a few steps backwards' by returning to the first two topics that Robert has mentioned at the very start of the discussion. Robert, however, does not 'give in' to this attempt to disrupt the consensus and asserts that he was just joking, (turn 18). Supporting Roberts' decision by using a general, rather than personal assertion ('so UFO', turn 19), Pat seems to try to make a decision for the whole group. Robert, however, uses a less imposing and more collaborative interactional strategy, using a persuasive remark (UFO is fun, turn 20). At this point it seems that the interaction has reached some sort of a closure, or the goal has been achieved and an apparent consensus on the topic to be chosen. Nevertheless, an analysis of the next episode reveals that the process of reaching a group agreement is complex.

To sum up the 'I suggest UFOs' episode, the scaffolding strategies which have emerged from the data of the first episode and which assisted in reaching the current goal can be clustered into two main groups. The first group contains interactional strategies that promote collaboration. These are: initiating, adding, questioning, expanding, explaining, responding, accepting, diverging, and contradicting on previous ideas. The second group includes interactional strategies that facilitate decision making. These are: taking leadership; accelerating discussion; ignoring irrelevant or distractive ideas.

In the next section I analyse the second episode, 'What other topics?' of the current group discussion in order to further explore and expand on the scaffolding strategies which have emerged from this data.

4.3.2 Collaboration in Action

Following Excerpt 4.2, I analyse the data by focusing on segments which shed more light and elaborate the aforementioned scaffolding strategies.

Excerpt 4.2 What other topics?

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
21 Tom: how about ghosts (.) Thai ghosts ?	QUES
22 Andy: life after death	ADD
23 Tom: =life after death (.) spiritual=	ADD
24 Robert: you have to write a sentence (.) persuade them that there IS (.)life after death that's what we have to do	REP/ADD
25 Pat: ok (.) I'm writing that	ACC
26 Robert: I did a presentation on prostitution once(.) that it should be legal	EXPD
27 Andy: so talk about prostitution then ( )	RESP
28 Robert: no (.) I don't want it (.) I'm trying to just give example	RESP
29 Andy: I'm so tired today	Off-task comment
30 Pat: =commit suicide?= 31 Tom: =commit=	QUES REP
32 Robert: what's with suicide?	QUES
33 Tom: ethical (.) unethical	EXPLA
34 Pat: that it's unethical act	REP
35 Robert: no but how are you gonna persuade them to do? like what (.) they should kill themselves?	CONTRA/QUES
36 Tom: no like	RESP
37 Andy: it's unethical to kill themselves	ADD
38 Robert: hey (.) EVERYONE KNOWS they shouldn't kill themselves	CONTRA
39 Pat: they still do	RESP
40 Andy: how about why they still kill themselves?	QUES
41Robert: because there's no //way out//	RESP
42 Pat: //but people//	Incomp. Utterance
43 Andy: why don't we come up with a product?	DIV
44 Robert: what?	QUES
45 Tom: you mean direct sale?	QUES
46 Andy: =yeah=	ACC
47 Robert: =that be fun= ((laughing)) but how are you gonna make a persuasive speech out of that?	QUES
48 Tom: through information	EXPLA
49 Andy: we'll make it like (.) running machine	ADD
50 Robert: so it's a commercial (.) advertising (.) 15-20 seconds (.) you have to make a freaking speech that last for like how many (.) what (.) 7 minutes each? Usually it's 30 seconds!	CONTRA
51 Andy: just write it down	Accel. Disc.
52 Robert: write it down first and we can cut it out later (.) whatever you guys wanna do (.) I don't mind (.) write it down (7)	Accel. Disc.
53 Andy: what else?	QUES
54 Pat: do you know how long we have to talk for?	QUES



55 Tom: same as before	RESP
56 Andy: 8 minutes?	QUES
57 Tom: 10 minutes	RESP
58 Pat: globalization?	QUES
59 Andy: =nah=	RESP
60 Pat: =like global warming=	ADD
61 Andy: we have to come up with something (.) there's not (.) there's no topic that everyone agrees (.) then we can just eliminate other ones and choose from these ((pointing))	DIV
62 Pat: =I'm trying to think of ( )=	Incompre. Input
63 Andy: =I want to talk about religion=	DIV

This episode begins when, in turn 21, Tom, another participant who, in the first episode, seems to be the most passive member in the group, decides to deviate from the apparently achieved consensus and throws in another topic on 'ghosts'. This stimulated Andy to add a new idea which links to Tom's –utterance 'life after death'. When, in turn 25, Pat says 'ok (.) I'm writing it', it seems that rather than maintaining her previous decision to go for Robert's idea of UFO's, she has accepted a new cycle of discussion, and is operating in collaboration with the other group members as well. In turns 21-25, there are several instances of collaboration where there is a succession of how the students add on to each others' previous utterances and ideas. What is particularly interesting is Robert's turn (24) in which he comments, "*you have to write a sentence (.) persuade them that there IS (.) life after death, that's what we have to do.*" Here, Robert appears to play a role of a teacher, reminding the group members the task in hand. This specific behavior also shows *intentionality* (Lidz, 1991 in Guerrero and Villamil, 2000) in which the goal is to promote self-regulation in the others. That is, Robert encourages the group members to maintain the goal of the task (an evidence of scaffolding). Moreover, the use of the pronouns 'you' and 'we' also indicates that Robert collaborates other group members in the discussion. According to Storch (2001), her interpretation of the use of second personal pronoun (singular) "you" is considered non-collaborative oriented. However, according to Sacks (1995), in English "you" does not discriminate between singular and plural reference. In the example (turn 24), it is apparent that "you" stands as a pronoun for 'everyone' in the group and as Sacks (1995:350) points out that 'we' excludes 'they' and 'they' excludes 'we' while 'you' excludes no one. Hence, the presence of the directives 'you' and 'we' in my opinion, is collaboration oriented.

In turn 26, Robert suddenly (and surprisingly) mentions a previous talk he has given on prostitution. Andy seems to take this comment as a new contribution, but in turn 28, Robert reveals that he just wanted to give an example of an 'overused' topic. In his interview, Robert noted:

*"I was just giving example and I did it before, it's boring, really, want something new, new topic. In many subjects many students talk about prostitution, whether it should be made legal or not, it's boring, I don't want to do it anymore..."*

(Stimulated Recall; 19/1/06)

Robert's 'careless' remark, and the fact that Andy accepts it at the face value, seems to hinder the flow of the decision making process, as if the conversation cycle is about to end. At this point, Pat throws in another idea (turn 30), 'commit suicide'. In turn 32, Robert requests further explanation probing for more information from Tom. However, coming to the conclusion that their ideas have little potential for elaboration, Robert questions in turn 35 once again to focus the group's attention on the task in hand (persuasive speech), saying that: *"no but how are you gonna persuade them to do? like what (.) they should kill themselves?"*

Similar to turn 5 in the previous episode, Robert seems to act like the 'teacher' as his questions provoke the others to explain. This requires Pat and Tom to provide explanations. Rather than disapproving or rejecting the other participants' ideas, Robert questions for further explanations. In this way he avoids a conflict within the group. This strategy is effective in avoiding disputational talk (Fisher, 1993).

In turn 43, Andy triggers the conversation to continue by diverging to another topic which is to advertise a product. Tom in turn 45, questions for further clarification and this helps the conversation to continue. Robert, however, poses more practical questions in relation to how they are going to make the speech persuasive. At this point, it seems to me that Robert is the most focused member, always referring back to the instruction of the task and always asking the same question: *'how are we gonna persuade...'* (turn 47). In turn 50, Robert points out that normal advertisement normally takes only 15-20 seconds but the speech they have to give has to be for at least seven minutes each so he is questioning as to how they would make the advertising speech last that long (again, a



practical question). However, it seems that none of the group members are able to give any further explanations so Andy (who suggested the topic) says, “just write it down”. Here, it seems that Andy is being quite authoritative in that he wants to include what he suggested in the topic list. In turn 52, Robert half heartedly agrees to list the ‘advertising topic’ down. Then in turn 53, Andy asks, ‘*what else*’ and thus allocates the next turn to the others. While no one has any other additional ideas, Pat (turn 54), follows Robert’s practicality by asking how long they have to present, orienting towards the requirement of the task. Towards the end of the episode, it seems that the conversation turns out to be ineffective in that Pat and Andy are just throwing in ideas (turns 58, 60, and 63) without any explanations or clarifications and it seems that the other group members do not attempt to ask for further explanations

In turn 61, Andy makes a point that since it seems that they cannot decide on a topic unanimously, they will all have to choose from what has been listed. This seems to be an attempt to ‘cut down’ and accelerate the decision making process. Nevertheless, it seems that the group members are not in a hurry to reach a decision, as illustrated in Excerpt 4.3 below.

To sum up, a feature of Robert’s leadership seems to fall into a two-stage decision making process where he lists all the suggestions and returns to them to choose later, hence, not neglecting his peers’ suggestions. He also seems to respond to everyone positively, hence, it helps to encapsulate the discussion. It seems that Excerpt 4.3 is mainly a continuation of Excerpt 4.2 and it does not provide any new insights regarding scaffolding. Therefore, I have pulled out only specific excerpts to illustrate interactions that are particularly significant.

#### **Excerpt 4.3 The Crazy Lady**

- |   |
|---|
| 64. Tom: how about the lady who went into school and?<br>65. Andy: =what is it?=<br>66. Pat: =oh (.) the mentally ill person= that went into the school? went crazy and stabbing people<br>67. Robert: it’s like the girl (.) she’s partially ill should she have punishment or not<br>68. Pat: that would be good (.) actually<br>69. Andy: so it’s like some crazy lady |
|---|

Here, Tom diverges the discussion by introducing another topic (turn 64). In this excerpt, I find that it is more of a ‘social talk’ because what Tom is talking about is in

the news at the time, a strategy which I consider to be valuable because new ideas can be acquired by making use of what is going on around them. Interestingly, Andy questions what the topic is about which triggers both Pat and Robert to expand and to provide additional information (turns 66-69). Hence, diverging of the discussion by Tom, questioning from Andy and expanding from Pat and Robert reveals an effective collaborative interaction in this particular excerpt.

The exchange of ideas and off task talk continues until, in turn 74, (Excerpt 4.4 below) Tom, who seems to be the most passive student voices his opinion, “ *but I think she has to have some treatment first...*” and then in turn 77, Tom helps Pat out with the use of both L1 and L2 on the vocabulary word. Here, I perceive Tom using Thai (L1) to facilitate understanding among the group members of a more specific vocabulary word. As in turn 78, from Robert’s response, he seems to get a better understanding of what Tom is getting at that the ‘crazy lady’ should get some kind of treatment at the habilitation center. This reveals that scaffolding does not always have to come from an ‘expert’. Tom, who I observed to be the least fluent in English (this is based on my observation in that he is not as fluent as the other three group members). However, he is able to provide useful knowledge during the discussion. This is similar to one of the extracts in Tan’s study (see Tan, 2000:130) that the less capable peer can play an important role in the group discussion in that the more capable ones can benefit from the others through interaction.

**Excerpt 4.4 The Crazy Lady**

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
73Pat=even though he says that she’s wrong but according to the law (.) she’s not wrong (.) because she’s mentally ill	ADD
74Tom: =ah ha (.) but I think she has to have some treatment first and when she better (.) then go to court=	EXPD
75Robert: she’s in jail now?	QUES
76Pat: no no (.) she’s like (.) not in jail (.) but in a (.) a	CLARI then ADD
77Tom: =mental hospital (.) [habilitation center]=	ADD
78Robert: =oh ok (.) for treat (.) treatment=	RESP

Next, in turn 99, Robert, who has always been the key member in provoking others to think critically about the practicality of their ideas is observed below.



### Excerpt 4.5 The Crazy Lady

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
99Robert: how are we gonna break it <sup>10</sup> into 3 main points? Um judgment? 100Pat: you haven't ( ) 101Robert: =by law er ( )= 102Pat: =no no (.) you have to think on one side ( )= 103Robert: =but how are you gonna break into 3 main points (.) that's impossible=	REP/QUES  Incompre. Input Incompre. Input Incompre. Input QUES /REP

In turn 103, in the above excerpt (4.5) Robert repeats again his task-oriented question (How will they divide up the topic into three main points). Robert takes into account the task instruction in which they have to break ideas into main points. As evidenced in the talk, Robert repeats his view and requests for explanations through questioning other group members. In this way, Robert employs the scaffolding strategy of trying to maintain the pursuit of the task goal (Donato, 1994).

In the next section I will demonstrate which scaffolding strategies help to move the discussion forward until its goal is finally reached and how this scaffolding is carried out by some of the group members.

#### 4.3.3 Strategies that promote collaboration

In the closure of the previous episode Robert questions the suitability of the previous ideas to the task. This questioning, which functions to stimulate the other members' thoughts and increase their awareness of relevant aspects of the task, seems to have been effective, as in the first turn of the last episode (Excerpt 4.6) of the group discussion (turn 104), Tom accepts Robert's initial UFOs topic. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

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<sup>10</sup> At this point, the students are working on how to divide the main points up, the word 'it' which Robert mentions means the main points that they have to specify in the outline. Eventually, the topic was dropped because they could not figure a way to divide the ideas appropriately.

**Excerpt 4.6 Finalising the topic**

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
104Tom: if UFO? 105Robert: we have a lot of stuff (.) man 106Pat: ok then UFO (.) let's say UFO and aliens 107Andy: //yes// 108Robert: //no no no// (.) think of the topics that you guys (.) that you guys came up with (.) like how you're gonna come up with main points	QUES RESP RESP ACC CONTRA and ADD

Tom responds to Robert's assertion in turn 103 (Excerpt 4.5) by posing a question (turn 104) "*If UFO?*". This response in the form of a question seems to function as a request for confirmation that if they choose Robert's idea they will be able to complete the task. Robert replies by affirming and encouraging (*we have a lot of stuff, man*), thus giving a green light to Pat to re-collaborate with him. Once Pat has agreed to the topic of UFO and elaborated on it by adding 'aliens', Andy joins in as well. However, in turn 108, Robert suddenly seems to feel reluctant to impose his idea on the others, and says: "*no no no (.) think of the topics that you guys (.) that you guys came up with (.) like how you're gonna come up with main points*". Once again, Robert uses 'you guys' to allocate the next turn to the others. It seems to me that Robert feels the group should try working on other topics first before choosing his. As a participant who has already proven good leadership ability, he does not try to impose his ideas but prefers to create a good rapport with the other members and make sure that the majority of the group members come to an agreement with him.

Nevertheless, Andy (turn 109) seems to come to a decision to adopt Robert's topic and asks a focused question which aims at finding out how to pursue the task. As illustrated in the next excerpt (Excerpt 4.7), the focused question moves the discussion forward.



In turn 111 Robert gives examples of how they can break the topic into three main points. Taking the role of the ‘expert’ who knows about UFOs more than others, Robert seems to push the group discussion back on the right track, which will eventually lead to a shared decision. It seems that Robert’s explanation has helped as, interestingly, in Turn 112, Andy helps Robert in adding to Robert’s idea about ‘Area 51 as another main point. This is something to make note of where in the beginning of the discussion, Andy has no idea what Area 51 is as he questioned Robert about the topic (refer to Excerpt 4.1, turn 10) but at this point, he is actually co-constructing ideas with Robert. This is interesting in that within 10-15 minutes, he has acquired new knowledge from his group members and now he plays an important role in co-constructing the ideas. Andy’s ZPD, is now ‘activated’ as how Guerrero and Villamil (2000) put it. That is, Andy’s knowledge on “Area 51” progressed with the guidance of the other group members.

By turn 113, the group has finalised the topic. However, in Turn 118, Andy points out that the use of pictures might not be convincing so Robert expanded with additional details in Turn 118 Robert: *there’s this documentary (.) people went to this place and they got lost (.) never return*. Here, Robert tries to point out to Andy that there is evidence to support and that they can make the speech persuasive because again in turn 119 Robert tries to point out to Andy

that the use of pictures and other supporting materials would help their speech to become more persuasive. Excerpt 4.8 illustrates how Andy keeps on questioning and doubting Robert’s idea, and how Robert provides short, focused answers and thus projects confidence on the other members who are promoted to support his idea and convince Andy to agree as well.

**Excerpt 4.7 Finalising the topic**

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
109Andy: how are you gonna make main points from this? ((pointing))	QUES
110Pat: hmmm	RESP
111Robert: ok (.) for example (.) how crop circles happen	EXPD
112Andy: Area 51?	ADD
113Pat: so we agree on UFO	ACC
114Robert: aliens and UFO (.) the same	ADD
115Pat: ok (.) pictures of crop circles and what’s the other one? Area 51? ((writing))	ACC then QUES
116Robert: yeah	ACC
117Andy: but all these things (.) it’s not persuasive (.) not really convinced	CONTRA
118Robert: there’s this documentary (.) people went to this place and they got lost (.) never return (6)	EXPD
119Robert: =pictures (.) and then we gotta find supporting materials=	EXPD
120Pat: =yeah=	ACC

Excerpt 4.8 Finalising the topic

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
121Andy: ok (.) let's stick to the topic but then it's not convincing because now you can only find (.) gather information on crop circles	RESP/ CONTRA
122Robert: //video clips//	RESP
123Andy: //video clips// and pictures are the same thing (.) you can't really say (.) if it's really true (.) we gotta convince (.) that's what I'm talking about (.) right now (.) how are we gonna convince?	EXPD/QUES
124Robert: <u>I KNOW</u>	RESP
125Andy: if we choose other topics (.)	DIV
126Robert: =there'll be articles (.) a lot of them=	ADD
127Pat: =a lot of factual ( )=	ADD
128Robert: =yeah=	ACC

Although in turn 121, Andy agrees to stick to Robert's idea, he questions it, saying that the information that they have at the moment is not enough. Robert, (turn 122) replies shortly and directly, by adding more supportive evidence to his claim. Andy seems like he does not want to agree and it appears as though there is a shift from Robert to Andy in that Andy seems to take control of the discussion and request the other group members to justify how they are going to make their speech persuasive (turns:121 and 123). Andy's reluctance to agree is evident in Turn 125, where he says "*if we choose other topics*", but the fact that it is ignored by other participants, shows that Robert has managed to convince them, and that once most group members are determined to come to an agreement, agreement is most likely to be achieved. In my interpretation, I believe Andy is thinking of another alternative and does not want to accept the topic of UFOs, even though it seems to be accepted by everyone else. In his interview, however, Andy said that he was just making a point and did not really mind which topic the group would choose. Nevertheless, he genuinely felt that if they were going to make a persuasive speech, it had to be convincing.

*"I'm just making a point, you know, just that I don't feel that pictures, it's persuasive enough. Actually, I don't really mind, whatever topic, I'm fine but just, it just got to be convincing.*

(Stimulated Recall, 19/1/06)

Throughout Excerpt 4.8, Andy seems to play the central role in that he consistently questions Robert about how convincing the group can be during the presentation.



Andy's thought provoking questions (e.g. turn 123) seem to trigger Robert to think more critically. Since the other group members are determined to stick to the UFO topic, his questioning, which at this stage appears to inhibit the decision making process, may serve later as a foundation to a better discussion, which is the aim of the task, and in this sense serves to scaffold the discussion. Evidenced by the interview, one of the group members, Pat says:

*"I mean with this task, Andy asks a lot of questions and made a lot of points, at first we were a bit vague like, how we would go about doing it and then when Andy asks questions, it kind of like, got us more, focused".*

(Stimulated Recall, 19/1/06)

In my view, this suggests that questioning is an important tool in discussion and learning, but if overused they can hinder the progress and might cause obstruction rather than construction of a dialogue. The last excerpt from this discussion shows how Pat tries to conclude that it is time to decide on a topic and Andy, realises that he cannot afford to go on 'doubting'.



In turn 129 there is an attempt from Pat to suggest the best alternative available. Although Robert still uses the tactic of not imposing his will (turn 130), it appears that Andy has realized that there is no turning point but to accept the leading ideas, both for social and practical reasons (turn 131). In 134-137, Andy, Pat and Robert come out with a future plan for pursuing the task. They are speaking with shared orientation in which the focus of the talk is related to how the task would be carried out. Here, both Pat and Robert have achieved intersubjectivity (Seedhouse, 2000; Rommetveit, 1979), in this case, they both have mutual understanding on how to go about in completing the task.

Nevertheless, in turn 138-40 Robert offers Andy and Pat a 'way out' suggesting that they should not accept his idea unless they really want to. This persistence on getting their genuine agreement reflects his attempt to create a collaborative dialogue. Just like what Swain asserts, "collaborative dialogue is dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building". As such, in this particular case, Robert is trying to get his peers to jointly make the decision on the topic. (Swain, 2000). By asking for his peers' approval, he is displaying the *affective involvement* which is an important feature of scaffolding (Lidz, 1991 in Gerrero and Villamil, 2000). So, Robert, once again, takes control and orients the group members to make the final decision in which later, he becomes successful. Eventually, Andy, who has been quite hesitant before is now determined to give a speech on UFOs and points out that there is a lot of information they can talk about. Based from my experience, it is the nature of Thai students to question and request opinions rather than being authoritative. I also see that each student tries to contribute something in the discussion. This is also evidence of students collaborating with one another in completing the task.

In turn 143 Andy finally agrees to take up the topic. As for Pat, I perceive her supportive comments (in turn 137) to help the discussion to be more dynamic and not involving just two students in the group, although in Turn 139, she reveals that she is feeling neutral. In turns 144-147: once Robert sees the topic has been finalised, he diverges the discussion and at the same time scaffolds the other members to think of the category (back to the theoretical paradigm that they had to follow: question of facts, values or policy; see Appendix 4.1; Task 2a) that the topic goes into by saying in turn 144 Robert says, "*so you need to know if it's question of facts, values //or //*."

Pat and Tom, in turns 145-147 respond to Robert's request collaboratively by completing each other's utterances and filling in gaps for one another (latching). I perceive this to be a significant

feature in helping one another through the development of ideas collectively. This feature contrasts with the teacher-student interactions in one of the extracts presented in Walsh (2002) where latching by teachers in completing students' turns are perceived as a less desirable feature because it minimizes the students' contributions and learning opportunities in the classroom discussion.

#### Excerpt 4.9 Finalising the topic

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
129Pat: coz this thing has been going on for quite a while (.) you know what (.) why don't we stick to this first (.) see if there's enough information and if there's not enough information then we can	DIV
130Robert: =change the topic (.) switch=	RESP
131Andy: = I don't think we can switch (.) what day are we presenting? =	QUES
132Pat: =Thursday=	RESP
133Tom: =next Thursday=	ADD
134Robert: but we have to do an outline (.) might have to do back home	ADD
135Andy: like with UFO (.) I need to do research (.) if we do this	ADD
136Robert: I don't know all (.) everything about UFO so gotta reseach too	RESP
137Pat: =there's new discovery every year so=	ADD
138Robert: =so you guys really think we should do this? =	QUES
139Pat: I'm kinda like in between (.) actually	RESP
140Robert: =we can't do this unless you wanna talk=	ADD
141Andy: =no no no(.) I think this one has a lot of information=	CONTRA then ADD
142Tom: I think this one is more difficult ((pointing))	EVA
143Andy: right (.) more information here (.) this actually good because has a lot of argument	EVA
144 Robert: so you need to know if it's question of facts, values //or //	EXPD
145 Pat: =//fact (.) fact//=	ADD
146 Tom: =yes or no=	ADD
147 Pat: =true or false= (.) ok (.) UFO then	ADD



I would say that the group has successfully completed the task: 1) they have finalised the topic among themselves and 2) they know which category the topic goes into, and this will help them to be able to structure the outline and hence, the presentation, successfully. Throughout the conversation, though Robert seems to take the 'leader' role, he is not abusing it but rather, is always questioning and probing others to think critically. What stands out about Robert from other group members is that he is always making sure that everyone is 'ok' with the topic. I believe this is a substantial part of group work, not relying on just one or two peoples' opinions and decisions but that the group members should be accountable for the completion of the task.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter I have presented an analysis of the data derived from Case 1. Findings suggest that two main categories emerged during the group interaction task in which the students employed the interactional strategies that promote collaboration and the interactional strategies that facilitate decision making, hence leading to effective scaffolding. Another finding is how one student (Robert) self-selects as 'leader' of the group and scaffolds his peers, therefore, acting as the main person in pushing the discussion forward. I believe this is a substantial indication of how students learn to take charge and become autonomous which leads to the students' success in completing the tasks (also see discussion in 7.5; p. 139). Findings also reveal that not only do the 'less capable' peers benefit from the 'stronger' peers but the 'stronger' peers can also benefit from the less capable peers through group interactions.

In the next chapter, I would like to focus on the cross-case comparative analysis by comparing Case 1 with two other case studies (Case 2 and Case 3). The comparative analysis is important in terms of generalization of findings across cases. (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). I would also refer back to examples in Case 1 and to investigate additional categories that emerge.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Cross-Case Comparative Analysis**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I presented a detailed analysis of Case 1 which shed more light into understanding better what is going on during the group discussion. Employing an in-depth analysis also reveals how students construct meanings and how the discussion gradually evolves. Here, I present a cross-case analysis of Case 1 and of two other cases I observed (I will call these Case 2 and Case 3). First, I give a general background of the students in Cases 2 and 3, followed by the category analysis of the three cases: the interactional strategies (i) that promote collaboration (illustrated mainly by episodes from Case 3 and are complemented with episodes from Cases 1 or 2) and (ii) that facilitate decision making (illustrated by episodes from Cases 2 and 3) followed by (iii) L1 scaffolding (illustrated by episodes from Case 2 and 3) and lastly (iv) teacher scaffolding (illustrated mainly by an episode from Case 2).

#### **5.2 Background of Cases 2 and 3**

Similar to Case 1, the students in Cases 2 and 3 are majoring in the Business English Department and are either in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year (see 4.2). However, students in Case 2 are students who have been educated in the Thai educational system and have never been exposed to any English speaking medium of instruction. On the other hand, students in Case 3 are combinations of both types of backgrounds (see student profiles in Appendix 3.1).

#### **5.3 Interactional Strategies that Promote Collaboration**

To complement with the analysis of Case 1 (see Chapter 4), the following are excerpts of how the different interactional strategies (namely: initiation, adding, expanding, diverging, contradicting, questioning, evaluating, and jointly constructed discussion strategies) have been employed by the students and how it has helped them to



collaborate and generate the ideas during the discussion<sup>11</sup>. In this section, Excerpt 5.1 (Case 3) below was chosen because of how one student (Wendy) consistently employed the interactional strategies especially by trying to justify her ideas throughout the discussion. What is revealing about Wendy is that she does not ‘give in’ right away if other group members happen to disagree or question about her ideas as demonstrated mostly by Dawn (another group member). This, I believe, helps to promote the discussion to progress effectively.

**Excerpt 5.1 Selecting a topic**

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
1. Wendy: ok (.) [I'm interested in going to Taiwan (.) can let people know about the country ]  (10)	INI
2. Dawn: about me (.) how to (.) how to make mummies	DIV
3. Wendy: make what?	QUES
4. Dawn: //mummies//	RESP
5. Sally: //mummies//	RESP
6. Wendy: =hmmmm=  (15)	RESP
7. Dawn: =hmmm= (8) what about this one? ((pointing at the list))	DIV
8. Wendy: about (.) stationary (.) like B2S and Double A <sup>12</sup> (inaudible) which shop to compete with um (.) oh (.) like 7 Eleven <sup>13</sup> (.) right (.) they sell the products like pencil, rubber, like that (.) but they open 24 hour right (.) but Double AA will (inaudible) something like B2S, pad and (inaudible) a book like that...	EXPD
9. Dawn: how could you get the information about Double AA? (3) coz I never know about this before (.) and I'm afraid that (.) information like (.) we couldn't find enough (.) might be (.) we don't have much to say....	QUES/EXPD/CONTRA
10. Wendy: I like to read a book about market share you know (.) it have many information about that (.) about competition and market share and umm.... I need to present about this before (.) and I think	EXPD

<sup>11</sup> Three students (Wendy, Dawn and Sally) are working on the first task (IS) and are brainstorming in order to select a common topic. The teacher acts as a facilitator in guiding and suggesting ideas to the students occasionally.  
<sup>12</sup> B2S and Double A are brands of stationary shops in Thailand  
<sup>13</sup> Seven Eleven is a 24-hour convenient store in Thailand

this (.) I have a clip VDO to show (.) advertise that (.) Double A not just paper	
11. Dawn: And how about Starbucks?	QUES
12. Wendy: Starbucks??? I <u>always</u> (.) many subjects (.) I always listen to Starbucks in many subject like in Business Communication, and many subjects (.) always speaking about Starbucks.	CONTRA
13. Sally: hmmm.... ok (...) shopping ((softly)) ((looking at the list)) what about shoes? (.) so what you want us to talk about (.) like brand name or ...?	QUES
14. Wendy: like style of shoes like (.) because shoes (.) can represent the type character people want to wear it like	EXPD
15. Sally: I think most of the (inaudible) are females and I think they already know about like (.) high heels or flat type or	CONTRA
16. Wendy: can talk about the brand or beautiful design or umm or u need for...	EXPD
17. Dawn: how about plastic surgery? I think it's like popular here and nowadays	DIV
18. Wendy: or in introduction we can say like (.) nowadays, women are not happy with their body (.) have you ever think of plastic surgery (.) umm (.) a woman that's married to some guy and later have baby and they will look ugly and then	ADD and EXPD
19. Dawn: I think we can talk about like (.) advantage or disadvantage	EXPD
20. Sally: I don't really know much about plastic surgery (.) I'm not sure	CONTRA
21. Teacher: Can I tell you what are the ones that I've heard before (.) every single semester (.) ok (.) how to make mummies (.) I listen to it twice already right (.) first of all you have to ask yourself (inaudible) (.) try to think of something original right (.) can be anything (.) how to pick a boyfriend or (.) could be anything (.) don't think of professional (.) conventional topic (.) ok?	SUGG and GUID
22. Dawn: hmmmm (.) ok	ACC
23. Sally: //so how?//	QUES
24. Dawn: [//plastic surgery// (.) I think it's like (.) popular here	REP
25. Wendy: hmmm (.) like in introduction (.) we can say(.) ok (.) a woman who's with a guy (.) after that they have a baby (.) after that they look ugly ((laughing)) I mean like nowadays (.) plastic surgery (.) like(.) for introduction (.) we can say like women (.) 'are you happy with the parts (.) //any parts of your body//'	EXPD
26. Sally: //I haven't (.) I haven't// listened much about plastic surgery before	CONTRA
27. Wendy: umm.... A women that stay with a guy (.) after that they have a baby after that they look like (.) ugly ((laughing softly))	EXPD



28. Dawn: I guess we can say the advantage or like (.) I'm not sure (.) hmm (.) how about how to lose a guy in 10 days? ((laughing))(.) how to get a guy in 10 days!?!? ((laughing))	DIV
29. Wendy: //find ways//	ADD
30. Sally: //I think I have read// an article in CLEO magazine (.) a couple issue ago (.) they talking something (.) like (inaudible) yeah (.) we can talk about that	ADD
31. Dawn: who's the cover?	QUES
32. Sally: I don't remember (.) it's not actually like how to get a guy in 10 days but how to like (.) what about like um (3) marriage tradition of each country (.) like in the US (.) the bride (.) the bride's father has to pay for all  (18)	DIV
33. Wendy: if compare about Indian tradition (.) the woman would pay ((laughing))	EXPD
34. Sally: hmmm (.) I watch one like (.) in UBC (cable TV) one family travel to another country (.) it's like different culture (.) and like that country want the hair of the woman (6) it might be interesting like one country different	EXPD
35. Dawn: =I don't know= (.) quite difficult (.)	RESP then CONTRA
36. Wendy: =yeah=	RESP

### Case 3, Discussion # 1

#### 5.3.1 Initiation

Classroom data reveals that for every group, one student normally initiates the discussion either by contributing ideas or to get the group 'started off' by asking questions (similar to Case 1, see Chapter 4). In this particular episode, Wendy starts off by suggesting an idea (something that she is personally interested in). This then is followed by another member, suggesting another idea. This is an effective way of getting the discussion started because once one student 'starts off', it can trigger others to contribute their ideas as in the excerpt above. So in the initial phase of the discussion, each student seemed to suggest ideas that were related to their personal interests. In addition, questioning by Sally in turn 23 ('so how?') seems to initiate collaboration from her peers which moves the discussion on 'plastic surgery' forward. I also believe that Sally seems to want more justifications from her peers on the 'plastic

surgery' topic as she contradicts earlier in turn 20.

### 5.3.2 Adding

Adding, according to Tan (2000) means the second idea is an addition to the first idea without judgement or evaluation or comment on the quality or truthfulness or validity of the propositional content of the first idea. Evidence of students adding on to each other's ideas in the Excerpt 5.1 above (Case 3, Discussion # 1) can be seen in turns 18-19, 29, 30, and 33. It started in the middle of the discussion when Dawn diverges by questioning about the topic on 'plastic surgery', Wendy then adds on to Dawn's idea by suggesting what they can say in the introduction (see turns 18). Dawn continues by pointing out that they could talk about the advantages and disadvantages of 'plastic surgery'. It can be seen that here, the ideas are generated through thinking together the way they would begin the introduction. Another part of an example of how students employed the 'adding' strategy began from turn 28 when Dawn suggests the topic on "how to get a guy in 10 days". The lexical item "how to" prompts Wendy to suggest a similar term, "find ways (turn 29)".

### 5.3.3 Expanding

Expanding means the second idea is an elaboration on a part or the whole of the first idea. It is an addition of more specific information to the part or whole of the preceding general idea<sup>14</sup> (Tan, 2000). It can be seen that the students also employed the interactional strategy in expanding on the ideas to gain more 'in-depth' understanding of what their peers suggested. This made the discussion to progress effectively before coming to a solution. Looking at turns 8 and 10 in Excerpt 5.1, it can be seen that Wendy is trying to justify and to provide more specific ideas. Especially in turn 10, Wendy expands on the idea by specifying how and where they could get more information on the topic of 'the stationary shops' after Dawn questions her in turn 8. Another occasion is when Sally contradicts Wendy on the topic on 'shoes' that everyone knows about it. This triggers Wendy to expand the idea that they can talk

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<sup>14</sup> The difference between 'adding' and 'expanding' is that with 'expanding' the interlocutors normally add 'specific' ideas to previous utterances while with 'adding', the interlocutors would add other general ideas in addition to previous utterances.



about the 'brand' or the 'design' (see turns 14 and 16). Interestingly, Wendy consistently employs the interactional strategies by expanding the ideas especially when Dawn diverges the discussion to the topic on 'plastic surgery' (see turns 19, 16, 28). It can be seen that through series of expanding, the students were able to develop general ideas into more specific ones which indicated that the students were involved in the skill of 'developing ideas in depth' as mentioned by Tan (2000:85).

#### **5.3.4 Diverging**

Diverging is the addition of a different idea to the preceding ideas. Diverging indicates the kind of thinking, diverging from the flow of thinking preceding it, or a change in the direction of thinking to something different (Tan, 2000). Diverging is also one common pattern that emerged from the data and it has been employed by the students mainly i) to contribute new ideas, ii) to trigger other's interests and iii) to divert the flow of the discussion.

Interestingly, the excerpt above reveals that Dawn was the one who seemed to be the main person in diverging the flow of the discussion. For instance, in turns 7 and 17, she diverges the flow of the discussion by questioning, "how about this..." and "what about this..." of the different topics listed by the group. In turn 7, she diverges because it seems that the group came to a silence so Dawn decides to question about another topic. Then in turn 17, she again diverges towards a different topic. It seems that the divergence is rather abrupt but Dawn's divergence seems to trigger Wendy's interests. Therefore, divergence in Excerpt 5.1 promoted students to be engaged in exploring the different topics thoroughly. Having said this, from going through other excerpts several times, I found that if 'diverging' is overused, it can also have a negative effect on the progress of the discussion in which I realised during my observation that the progress of the discussion seemed to be hindered in that ideas were not developed. As in the example below:

Excerpt 5.2 Selecting a topic

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
9. Pin: [/c'mon // (.) what topic?]	QUES
10. Jan: Kood Island? (.) [we can say] (.) when we go to the island (.) take the bus from coach station to Trat <sup>15</sup> and then take a car	ADD
11. Jan: [so (.) what else? About teenagers?]	DIV
12. Nan: [abroad] (.) culture shock	DIV
13. Jan: how about night life (.) no?	DIV
14. Nan: tourism (.) tourism	DIV
15. Vinny: [it's too general]	CONTRA
16. Nan: [tourism](.) but we can choose something specific(.) we have many pictures of us on that trip too	EXPD

Case 2, Discussion #1

The example above reveals unsuccessful peer scaffolding because students diverge the flow of discussion too often which turns out to have a negative effect rather than positive on the progress of the discussion. It can be seen in turns 11-14 that because of successive divergence, it results in the group to ignore each others' ideas. This is because each individual is just concerned in contributing their own ideas and do not seem to care about what the others are saying. Moreover, I would like to add my reflexive notes during the observation of the discussion below. I found that the students were struggling:

•Excerpt 5.3

<p><i>Reflexive account during the observation:</i></p> <p><i>The students have good ideas but it seems they lack the ability to expand on those ideas. I feel that this happens all the time where students just throw in ideas and not getting anywhere. I feel that no matter what, teachers will have to guide and support students and they are not to be left on their own devices. I tried to recall of the times when I was teaching as to whether I paid enough attention to the students. But now, I think I see more clearly of what difficulties the students are having. I hope that, once I return to teach again, I hope that I can be a teacher and an observer so I know what difficulties my students might be facing.</i></p> <p>(10/11/06)</p>
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<sup>15</sup> Trat is the name of a province in Thailand.



### 5.3.5 Contradicting

In contradicting, the second idea contradicts the validity or truthfulness of the first idea, indicating that the first idea is not true. I believe it is a valuable interactional strategy because a discussion would not be very effective if everyone agrees with everything. Moreover, what matters is that students need to use some judgement or evaluation when contradicting another person's ideas. For example in turn 9, Dawn contradicts Wendy's suggested idea on the 'stationary' topic by pointing out that she is afraid there would not be enough information to present. Interestingly, Wendy tries to justify but is not successful. Then in turn 11, Dawn suggests to talk about 'Starbucks' and this time, Wendy contradicts with a reason that she has listened to the topic many times already in other subjects. This then prompts the group to go on with the next topic. Lastly, in turns 20 and 26 Sally contradicts Wendy and Dawn about the 'plastic surgery' topic because she does not know much about the topic. A contradiction because looking at the turns that follow, Wendy (turn 27) tries to expand her ideas but Sally seems to diverge the group's attention to another idea which is apparent in turns (30 and 32) where she shares with the group what she has read in a magazine and suggests a different topic.

Going through how students contradicted one another, it helped the discussion to progress effectively in that they had an opportunity to explore the weaknesses and appropriateness of the topic because the group members use their judgements to evaluate. I believe that after the evaluation, it helped them to decide whether they would drop the topic or not. This way, I perceive the group to think together critically and not just agreeing or disagreeing without any reasons to support (also see section 5.3.7).

### 5.3.6 Questioning

"What about this one" and "how about....?", these are the common types of questions which occur frequently in the data especially when the students were selecting a topic (see Excerpt 5.1: turns 8, 10, 12, 14 and 18). Questioning, as reviewed by Tan (2000) tends to prompt propositional content and that there are several types of questionings (e.g. prompting speaker to add a similar idea; prompting for expansion; prompting in

shifting the topic of discussion). In this case, students employed questioning strategies mainly 1) to diverge the discussion, 2) to request for expansions or adding, 3) to question for clarification, 4. initiate new ideas and 5) simply as genuine questions. The group started off by suggesting two topics and after quite a long pause, Dawn decided to question about another topic on the list which diverged the discussion to a new idea (turn 7). This also prompted Wendy to expand on the topic.

Next, in turn 13, Sally diverges the discussion through questioning which seems to interrupt the flow of the discussion but at the same time, it prompts Wendy to add specific contents for a potential topic. Once again, the cycle of questioning from one member requesting for the others to expand on the idea repeated until the end of the excerpt (e.g. turn 13 ‘what about shoes? So what you want us to talk about like brand name or?’; turn 17: ‘how about plastic surgery?’). It can be seen that questioning seemed to play a significant role in that it triggered others to contribute and to express ideas and opinions. In addition, Anton and DiCamilla, (1999) point out that through questioning, it invites the other listeners to actively participate in the task.

Another example from Case 1 illustrates how ‘questioning for clarification’ plays an important role in the discussion especially when the students are seeking for a solution. Here, the students are constructing an outline and they are trying to follow the ‘structure’ as taught in class. The students are composing a sentence for the ‘purpose of the presentation’ (see Appendix 4.1 for example of outline of Group Task 1).

**Excerpt 5.4: Constructing outline**

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
101.Andy: what page is that?	QUES
102.Robert: 94	RESP
103.Pat: to inform (.) that’s all?	QUES
104.Tom: =that’s all (.) coz they have 2 types=	RESP
105.Andy: =I’m confused=(.) when your general purpose inform	RESP
106.Pat: the purpose is just to inform?	QUES
107.Tom: there are two types(.) inform and persuade	ADD
108.Robert: //oh//	RESP
109.Andy: //oh (.) ok//	RESP

Case 1, discussion # 3

First, Andy starts off with a genuine question by asking Robert which page in the text he has to refer to. Then Pat, being unsure of what she has to write, questioned in turns



103 and turns 106, “to inform (.) that’s all?”. Interestingly, Tom, the most passive student, is the one to provide Pat with the correct answer. Hence, at this point, Tom demonstrates clear understanding of the task (see turns 104 and 107) while the other three group members were still confused as can be seen from questioning for clarification posed by Pat. This episode reveals how students co-construct knowledge together through a series of questioning and responding. Moreover, it can be seen that the less proficient student (in terms of English fluency) Tom, provided help to the more proficient students. They had successfully scaffolded one another and were able to find an answer to their problem. However, questioning is not always an effective strategy because if overused, it can hinder the progress of the discussion (see section 4.3.3; excerpt 4.8 for example).

5.3.7 Evaluating

Evaluating means the second idea is an evaluation of the quality, the truthfulness or validity of the first idea. The second idea is often an evaluative comment such as ‘that’s good’ and ‘that’s interesting’ etc. judging the quality of the first idea by using evaluative adjectives. I now would like to point out how two students, Dawn and Sally consistently evaluate peers’ ideas (refer back to, Excerpt 5.1 turns 9 and 15). Dawn’s evaluation pushes Wendy to try to ‘revive’ her idea that it could be one potential topic (see turn 10). Then in turn 15, Sally’s evaluation once again triggers Wendy to respond. It seems that Wendy is the only person in the group who is always trying to defend and justify her ideas.

In addition, in Excerpt 5.5 the students are suggesting different ideas in selecting a topic for their persuasive speech. Wendy suggests two ideas, one on the ‘massaging machine’ and the other on ‘mineral water’ and is expanding on the second idea. However, after listening to Wendy’s suggestion, Dawn evaluates in turn 18 by saying, “I think it’s good but” and then Sally agrees with Dawn by contradicting Wendy’s idea. At the end of the excerpt, Dawn once again contradicts by suggesting that it might not be possible to persuade the audience to drink the mineral water (see turn 20). Dawn’s evaluation prompts Wendy to justify her position. Here, the students are said to be engaged in generating ideas critically, hence the talk is said to be exploratory (Mercer, 1995) in that the group went through a joint decision making process in which perspectives were offered.

Excerpt 5.5 Selecting the topic

Turn/Text	Interactional functions
17 Wendy: //what if we// (.) question of policy (.) it's action (.) can sell massage machine (.) massage our head ((laughing)) (.) we have to persuade the audience to do something (.) I used to see this product (.) mineral water (.) can't remember the brand (.) they try to persuade that this mineral water (.) is (.) health purpose (.) if we drink with medicine (.) the medicine will go into the blood faster (.) so they're trying to persuade people to drink this mineral water (.) that it's as good as drinking milk	EXPD
18 Dawn: I think it's //good but//	EVA
19 Sally: //yeah// but I think we might have little information to talk about	EVA and CONTRA
20 Dawn: =yeah (.) and what if we speak= and I don't think we can persuade everyone to turn to drink this mineral water	CONTRA
21 Wendy: = but at least people would become interested (.) and maybe want to try=	RESP
22 Dawn: =at least try=	REP
23 Wendy: yeah (.) because I think they have evidence to support	ADD

Case 3: Discussion # 4



### 5.3.8 Jointly constructed discussion

One other theme that emerged in the data is the joint discussion of the students during the writing stage. Excerpt 5.6 is an example of when the students are writing an outline and Pat is trying to select the right choice of words. Pat is requesting for help then in turn 31 Robert responds to her request and tries to put the words together and here, I perceive that the students are 'exploring' with the language together. Interestingly, Tom who has been the most passive in the group discussion proposed the word "disadvantage" (turn 38) which is later taken up by Robert (turn 41). In relation to Tan (2000), she might argue that there is very little or no justification or critical thinking, hence noting that the discussion is not effective in terms of construction of knowledge.

However, by using a conversation analysis approach I can examine how students think together. This is indicated by the overlap of turns (33-34; 39-40) and latches (35-36; 43-44) during the process of finding the right word/term. The overlaps and latches thus, indicate the type of conversation that occurs naturally (Walsh, 2002). It can be seen in turn 42 in which Pat finally takes up and put together what the other group members propose and compose the sentence, "the major reason of the disadvantages (.) are(.) being...". Hence, the interaction demonstrated how the learners pooled their knowledge together and to finally reach a conclusion, a situation in which researchers such as Donato, 1996; Guerrero and Villamil, 1994 and Ohta, 1995 refer to as 'mutual scaffolding'. Interestingly, I found that the joint construction during the writing stage was mainly focused in completing each others' utterances and providing choice of lexical items through 'adding' strategy hence leading to effectiveness in co-constructing the ideas collectively.

With the use of CA, the latches and overlaps of the turns reveal how the participants contribute to the discussion as they strive to accomplish the task by helping one another compose a structured sentence in English. Hence, there is a sense of the flow of the discourse which I perceive to indicate that the students are working towards the same objectives.

### Excerpt 5.6 Finding the right choice of words

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions	Conversation Analysis
31. Robert: the major points of <u>being</u> (.) the(.) em(.)em	ADD	Overlapping
32. Pat: no(.) it doesn't make sense(.) <u>major</u> (.) em	CONTRA then ADD	
33. Robert: em (.) em (.) //we can//	ADD	
34. Pat: //the 3 major REASONS// (.) I can't think of the word 'reason' ((laughing))	ADD	Overlapping
35. Robert: =3 major reasons(.) not being in a relationship=	ADD	Latching
36. Pat: =it's confusing (.) isn't it(.) the 3 major reasons=	QUES	Latching
37. Robert: not being in a relationship (.) of being (.) the 3 major reasons	ADD	Overlapping
38. Tom: of disadvantage ((soft voice))	ADD	
39. Robert: //of//	RESP	
40. Pat: //of//	RESP	Overlapping
41. Robert: yeah(.) of the disadvantages of being in a relationship (6)	ADD	Latching
42. Pat: the major reason of the disadvantages (.) are (.) <u>being</u> (.) (writing and saying what she's writing)) this is good you know(.) we can get work done(.) the major reason (.) 's' are	REP	
43. Robert: =are (.) it's gonna be a run on sentence(.) it's gonna be long=	RESP	
44. Pat: =no (.) I change it=	RESP	

Case 1: Discussion # 3



### 5.3.9 Accepting

Responding to each others' utterances through accepting (e.g. yeah, ok, right, oh) is one pattern that emerges in the data. It is how the students display their understandings of each others' turns. As in the example below (taken from Case 3, Discussion # 3) in which Dawn accepts and acknowledges Wendy's and Sally's ideas and this reveals that there is a shared understanding of all the three members which lead to an effective joint discussion.

#### Excerpt 5.7 The Introduction

- 16.Wendy: [what if we say] (.) nowadays (.) there more girls than a guy (.) and this point like(.) first say(.) have you ever felt lonely(.) [and then link]
- 17.Dawn: =[yeah (.) ask them to look at the two guys in the class]= ((laughing))
18. Sally: =[So(.) we can start by asking]= the //audience to look around the classroom//
- 19.Dawn: [yeah] (.) //look around yourself//
- 20.Sally: [we can ask them to observe how many guys are there around you (.) see how difficult it is to find guys]

#### Case 3, Discussion # 3

Hence, it can be seen that responses such as 'yes' 'no' 'ok' plays an important role in promoting collaboration during the discussion. Moreover, it is a way of acknowledging other group members' ideas as well as a way of engaging the interlocutors together during a conversation. I believe responsive functions contribute to elaboration of 'good listenership' which in a way can push the conversation to move forward.

### 5.4 Interactional strategies that facilitate decision making

In this section, I would like to give examples of the strategies students employed in making decisions. From reading through all the data over and over again I found that in all three cases, I observe that one student normally takes the role of the 'leader' and I perceive this to help the discussion to progress effectively. Moreover, the students were observed to engage in making decisions together from selecting the topic to managing how they would complete the task effectively. What emerged are several interactional strategies that facilitate decision making.



### 5.4.1 Taking leadership

Taking leadership is one dominant strategy that the students employed that emerged from the classroom observation data. Though not assigned by the teacher I observed that for each group discussion, there seems to be one student who takes 'leadership' or takes the 'teacher' role. As in the excerpt below:

#### Excerpt 5.8 Dividing the work

**Example:**

65. Dawn: =ok (.) now= (.) we divide our work

66. Wendy: =ok=

67. Dawn: we have to have introduction and ways and conclusion (.) introduction and the first tip (.) first technique (.) who wants to take this one? ((pointing))

68. Wendy: I think we can do second week?

(7)

69. Dawn: today is better than next week (.) because this week we can search the information [and next week we can discuss the details

70. Wendy: [alright, alright]

71. Dawn: ok or not?!

72. Sally: [//how about//]

73. Wendy: [//how do you want// the introduction to be like?]

74. Dawn: Introduction (.) then first technique (2) you wanna do introduction? ((looking at Wendy and Sally)) I think um (.) I will divide this 1, 2.... ((writing))

(6)

75. Sally: =I think the conclusion= (.) we don't need to do it yet (...) we don't know what we're gonna focus on so....

76. Dawn: =yeah (.) but I want to divide the work first and then= (.) next week we'll know about all of this and we know who'll get the conclusion (.) I want to get this one ((pointing))

#### Case 3, Discussion # 1

The students are deciding 'who is going to do what' after they had discussed briefly about the introduction of the speech. In the above excerpt Dawn took leadership and started off by saying, 'ok we divide our work'. This reveals that she is allocating work to other group members, just like how a teacher would do to assign work to the students. Though in turn 68 Wendy suggests that it can be done later, Dawn still insists that it is better to divide the work now rather than postponing it. Though on the surface level, it seems that Dawn is dominating but in my perception, having someone in the

group to organise and manage the task can help the work to be completed systematically and effectively just like what Dawn is doing.

This is also similar to Case 1 as previously discussed in Chapter 4 (see Excerpt 4.1) in which Robert took charge by collaborating others and also through provoking his peers to contribute ideas. In addition, I would like to add my reflexive notes during the observation at this point as follows:

#### **Excerpt 5.9 Reflexive Notes**

As I was observing the discussion, I realised that Dawn's role reminds me of my experience when I took one of the units in the Doctoral programme. We had to do group work and similarly, we had to come up with a common topic. At first we each contributed our ideas, and in the beginning of the discussion, I just don't have any idea how we all could agree on a common topic because it seems that everyone wants different topics but after a while, one of the group members 'took charge' of the discussion (I'll call him Kyle), I would not say he took control of everything but more or less acted as the 'facilitator'. Seeing that we could not decide on a topic, I remembered him saying something like, 'why don't we scope down the topics to two to three topics and choose from there' it was something along that line. Kyle took the role of the 'leader' and finally we came to a decision to use one of the group member's topic, of course, not all of us agreed to the topic but we chose according to the majority of the group. Kyle then allocated the work asking the group which parts each person wants to talk about, just like what Dawn was doing in the excerpt above. I did not feel at all that he was imposing any power on the group. Like Dawn, she took the role of the leader and helped promote the discussion to flow and from my observation, it doesn't seem that the other group members felt uncomfortable about it. Though at the end of the excerpt, it seems that Dawn was a bit 'controlling' but I believe her intention is to get some work done.

(Observation, 10/11/05)

The excerpt above is a good example of how Dawn seems to act as the facilitator and directs the group into completing the task efficiently. Having said this, it does not mean that Dawn's role as a facilitator would exclude the others from being leaders because from the classroom observation, there are several occasions in which the 'leadership' role shifts from one student to another. Next, I discuss how students direct each others' attentions towards the task goal.

#### **5.4.2 Directing attention to task goal (s)**

The next excerpt is taken from Case 2, Discussion # 4. Right from the beginning of the discussion, the students direct each others' attentions to the task goal as to what the requirement of the task is. Here, they were working on the persuasive speech task and they have to come up with a topic and then try to persuade the audience to believe them.



In the excerpt below, the students are orienting one another of the task goal as can be seen in turn 8 in which Pin asks for clarification and then in turn 9, Jan responds by giving an example. In turn 10, Vinny clarifies her understanding of the concept. It can be seen that the turns consist of clarification requests in which the marker is 'right?' (turns 8 and 10). It is important that the students pay close attention to the task goal especially before 'getting down' to carrying out the task so that the group would not go off the track.

#### **Excerpt 5.10 Selecting a topic**

**Example:**

7. Jan: [persuade something that's useful]

8. Pin: [wait (.) it has to be two points of view] (.) agree and disagree right?

9. Jan: [yeah (.) has to be (.) like (.) that people have two points of view like] (.) abortion (.) [something like that]

10 Vinny: [but we focus on only one point of view right?]

11 Pin: hmm (.) [think so]

#### **Case 2, Discussion # 4**

This is in line with the work of Stokoe (2000) where the students' topic of discussion starts with some form of clarification of the task demands. Orientating the gist of the tasks also helps the group members to stay focus. Next, I discuss how students accelerate their group discussions.

#### **5.4.2 Accelerating discussion**

There are times when students have to accelerate the discussion in order to 'get things done'. From the cross-case analysis, phrases like, 'list it down first', 'we have to come up with something', and 'just do it' emerged in the data which helped to accelerate the discussion. As in the excerpt below (taken from Case 3, Discussion # 3), the group realises that they have to do an oral presentation in the following class so they are deciding what to do next. Sally (turn 150) makes a suggestion that they should think of the details individually and then start working on the power point for the presentation. Hence, scaffolding by Sally helps the discussion to move on.

### Excerpt 5.11

**Example:**

150. Sally: [um(.) why don't we(.) we know who's doing which part already(.) then we each take care of the details of our own part(.) then we'll see(.) the details and what to say(.) we can put this in the power point(.) can we do that?]
151. Dawn: [No(.) but teacher doesn't want us to put all the wordings in the power point]
152. Wendy: [yeah yeah(.) I know(.) we can put in= //short phrases]//
153. Sally: [//short phrases//(.) or we can put in](.) getting information [and then this one(.) we can do that in the] power point

(Case 3, Discussion # 3)

However, there are times when students focus in accelerating the discussion and this seems to lead to ignorance in responding to peers' questions and lack of any attempt in justifying the ideas, as in the example below:

### Excerpt 5.12

**Example:**

- 27 Nan: [list the topics and then choose later] (.) [sex before the appropriate age?]
- 28 Vinny: [what do you mean (.) the appropriate age (.) what's the appropriate age?]
- 29 Nan: [just list first]
- 30 Tan: =hmmm (.) persuade (.) persuade [people not to]=
- 31 Pin: =persuade (.) [men not to abuse women]=
- 32 Vinny: [no one agrees with it anyway]
- 33 Tan:[ persuade people not to be too materialistic (.) not to use money lavishly]
- 34 Nan: //no//
- 35 Vinny: [//that's too general//]

(Case 2, Discussion # 4)

It can be seen that in turn 29, Nan refuses to respond to Vinny's question. Tan (2000) notes that this type of talk is not effective for the construction of knowledge. This is because there was no further attempt to expand or justify on the ideas. As can be seen in the turns that follow (turns 30-35) in which the group went on and contributed other ideas. In addition, Mercer (1995) and Fisher (1993) would refer to this type of interaction as 'cumulative talk' in which ideas are accepted or unaccepted without discussion.



#### 5.4.4 Ignoring distractive ideas

In order for the discussion to flow smoothly, it is necessary that 'distractions' such as students joking around or contributing ideas that are irrelevant should be ignored. The example below shows a discussion in which students seem to joke around a lot, compared to the other two cases. Hence, the chosen excerpt would be the most appropriate in representing how the student (Jan) handles the situation when her peers contribute irrelevant or distractive ideas.

#### Excerpt 5.13

##### Example

23 Nan: //hmmm//

24 Jan: //hmmm//

25 Nan: ways to get rid of cockroaches ((laughing))

26 Jan : [no(.) stop playing (.) stop playing]

##### Later...

32. Nan: [what are we gonna choose (.) sexual bias?] ((laughing))

33. Pin: [//no//]

34. Vinny: [//no//]

35. Jan: [serious please]

Case 2, Discussion # 1

In this task, the students are selecting a topic for their informative speech. However, there are several occasions when the students are being distractive rather than being contributive. As can be seen in the excerpt above, in which Nan (turns 25 and 32) suggests topics but seems she is joking from the 'laugh' at the end of her contribution. Jan, as someone who had taken the 'leadership' role all along, responds by saying, 'no, stop playing' in turn 26 and later, says, 'serious please' in turn 35. Jan, took the role as a 'controller, and I believe that this helps the students (especially this group) to be more attentive about what they are doing and to get the group members to contribute the topics.

#### 5.5 L1 and scaffolding

In the previous chapter, students scaffold one another in developing ideas and helping one another by employing different interactional strategies (see Chapter 4 for evidences of scaffolding). There was also one occasion in which a student in Case 1 (Tom) used

L1 to scaffold his peers (see analysis of Excerpt 4.4 p.81; also see literature review by Anton and Dicamilla, 1999). Hence, in this section, I provide excerpts from Cases 2 and 3 in which most of the students have not been exposed to English medium of instructions (see Appendix 3.1) so they tend to employ L1 to provide scaffolded help. As such, utterances that were in Thai were translated by me during transcribing the data, hence square brackets [ ] are used to differentiate them from the ones that were spoken in English. The episodes that follow illustrate how L1 is used in scaffolding and how students are engaged in accessing L2 linguistic forms.

Here, the students are composing an introduction for their informative speech. They are figuring out how they would begin the introduction and composing the script together. The subcategories that emerged are how students use L1 in scaffolding to 1) talk about the meta-linguistic function, 2) evaluate meaning of text, and 3) maintain intersubjectivity of the group. I provide an example of each subcategory respectively:

#### **Excerpt 5.14 Writing an outline (Meta-linguistic function)**

##### **Example**

92.Jan: [what should we say?] Have you (.) [no (.) remember last time we said] (.) have you (.) have anyone been to a place where you can enjoy both the sea and the waterfall?

93.Nan: ohhh (.) have you ever been(.) let's say have you ever visit(.) visit(.) [don't forget e-d]

94.Jan: ok (.) have you ever visited the place(.) [right]?

##### **Case 2, Discussion # 3**

In turn 92, a student, Jan collaborates others by saying, "what should we say....[remember last time we said] (.) have you (.) have anyone been to a place where you can enjoy both the sea and the waterfall". According to Anton and DiCamilla (1999), by bringing the attention of the partner of the language structure that had been discussed in the previous meeting, it sets in motion collective scaffolding which is likely to facilitate a resolution or conclusion. This triggers Nan to come up with a new sentence structure and her utterance, "let's say" implies an inclusion that the new sentence structure is better than the previous one. Moreover, Nan also reminds Jan not to forget to put an 'e-d' at the end of the word 'visit'. Nan's assertion serves to provide scaffolding for the production of the grammatical structure. Moreover, there are several



occasions in which one particular student, Nan, consistently provides help with the grammar structures and also helps out in selecting the choice of words during the 'writing the outline' task. In the example below the group was writing an outline for their topic, "Fun Trip on the Island" and they are writing about what activities they did (Jan, being the writer). Here, Nan provides Jan with an alternative for the word 'view' with the term 'scenery' in turn 64 while Jan writes them down. Here, Nan makes use of L1 to explain to her peers that the meaning is similar to the word 'view'.

#### Excerpt 5.15 Writing an outline (Evaluate meaning of text)

##### Example

62. Pin: take photo  
 63. Jan: with beautiful hmmm (.) view  
 64. Nan: view (.) scenery (.) [means beautiful view]  
 65. Jan: visit (.) visit water fall ((writing))

##### Case 2, Discussion # 3

The last example below shows how L1 is used to maintain task goal. In this interaction, the students are discussing how they would write the introduction for the presentation. Previously, the students have been speaking mostly in English during their discussion (their topic is on the techniques in flirting) until Dawn, one of the group members mentions that they should think in Thai first (their L1). In turns 13-16, the 'what if we say' shows that Dawn and Wendy are checking with one another of their ideas and to ensure that the group agrees. The value of L1 here is that it reveals a shared understanding of the group members because after each utterance in L1, it is followed by the content of what they were going to say in English. It can be seen in turns 17 and 18, that there is an agreed decision to include the content as part of the script.

#### Excerpt 5.16 Writing introduction (Maintain intersubjectivity)

##### Example

13. Wendy: =like (.) you like someone (.) [ if the answer is yes]=  
 14. Dawn: = [and if the answer is] no (.) [ I can't think of anything right now]=  
 15. Wendy: [ if the answer is no(.) hmmm]  
 16. Dawn: [what if we say] ((inaudible)) (.) based on our experience  
 17. Wendy: [what if we say] (.) nowadays (.) there more girls than a guy (.) and this point like(.) first say(.) have you ever felt lonely(.) [and then link]  
 18. Dawn: =[yeah (.) ask them to look at the two guys in the class]= ((laughing))

##### Case 3, Discussion # 3

To sum up, L1 serves to establish mutual agreement on the goals of the task and to

maintain intersubjectivity among the group members. The use of L1 has also helped the students to manage the tasks effectively, which is similar to the study of Anton and DiCamilla (1999) where L1 enables students to check with one another in defining the task.

## **5.6 Teacher scaffolding**

Next, I would like to discuss the importance of teacher scaffolding. Throughout the three cases, the data show that teachers used strategies to facilitate the group discussion through (i) giving general directions, (ii) questioning the students and (iii) orienting the students to task requirement. Data from cross-case analysis reveal that the teacher used a number of strategies to scaffold group decision making as described below.

### **5.6.1 Giving general directions**

In Case 3 (see below; part of discussion taken from Excerpt 5.1) the teacher suggests ideas and orients the students to the task topic by saying that they should not think of 'professional' topics (see turns 17-24). However, this direction does not seem to facilitate decision making. As evident in the transcript that after the teacher's scaffolding, one student still mentions the topic 'plastic surgery' which is a rather conventional topic and earlier in the conversation, a group member has opposed to the topic before hand. It could be that the teacher's scaffolding was too general because she did not build on what the group members had said nor did she probe for their decision making. Hence, other scaffolding strategies appear to be more successful as illustrated below.

17Dawn: how about plastic surgery? I think it's like popular here and nowadays

18Wendy: or in introduction we can say like (.) nowadays, women are not happy with their body (.) have you ever think of plastic surgery (.) umm (.) a woman that's married to some guy and later have baby and they will look ugly and then

19Dawn: I think we can talk about like (.) advantage or disadvantage

20Sally: I don't really know much about plastic surgery (.) I'm not sure

21Teacher: Can I tell you what are the ones that I've heard before (.) every single semester (.) ok (.) how to make mummies (.) I listen to it twice already right (.) first of all you have to ask yourself (inaudible) (.) try to think of something original right (.) can be anything (.) how to pick a boyfriend or (.) could be anything (.) don't think of professional (.) conventional topic (.) ok?

22Dawn: hmmm (.) ok

23Sally: //so how?//

24Dawn: [/plastic surgery/ (.) I think it's like (.) popular here



### 5.6.2 Questioning students which help them to summarise their progress.

In Case 2, (see Excerpt 5.17) the students are trying to select a topic for the persuasive speech. However, it seemed that the discussion is not 'going anywhere' as from my observation, it seemed that the group was not taking the discussion seriously and they were having difficulties in deciding on a common topic. The teacher then approached the group to see how they were progressing by asking: "what topics have you thought of?". The students respond by mentioning one of the topics they discussed. The teacher responds back by saying, "isn't it a bit unethical, it's unethical". Thus, moving the discussion forward--discussing the chosen topic. It seems that scaffolding by questioning activated the students to think more critically and to regulate the decision making process. It can be seen that learning takes place through the assistance of the teacher and according to Webster and Roe, (1998: 193) it is considered learning-driven (falls into Quadrant D in the framework). As they assert, "Learners are not seen as isolated individuals who succeed or fail by their own efforts. Children participate with adults to interrogate events, negotiate tasks and solve the problems together" (*ibid*, 1998:195). Hence, it can be seen from the excerpt that the teacher adds information and identify key elements for the group (e.g. turn 10) which falls into the second dimension of the second dimension of the components of scaffolding suggested by Webster and Roe (*ibid*: 199). In addition, two students, Vinny and Nan reveal how teacher scaffolding helps them during the discussion as follows:

Vinny says:

*"I think we have been wasting our time, not knowing which topic to choose at first. Then when the teacher helps us, it kind of pushes us to think seriously but still we have to come up with a topic, which is difficult. The time is also running out and I am starting to be worried and we have to have the outline ready at the end of class, I'm worried".*

Nan says:

*"and when Acharn<sup>16</sup> says we have to care about our topic, I try to think um I remember er we were reading magazines and reading the horoscopes. We read it all the time and recently I went to see a fortune teller, I think that these things, they're not true all the time but some people still believe so much in it, so I suggested the topic, I want to tell people that it's not good to believe everything the fortune teller says, it should be a good topic".*

(Stimulated Recall, 18/1/06)

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<sup>16</sup> The word, "Acharn" is a Thai word normally used when students address the teacher.

Therefore, it is apparent that the students should not be left to work on their own. That is, guidance from the teacher is still crucial for the students to accomplish the tasks.



5.6.3 Orienting the students to the task requirement

Also, in Case 2 (see Excerpt 5.17), the teacher orients the students to the task requirement by first saying, “you have to care about what you’re going to talk about (turn 10). This appeared to affect the students’ thinking process as it triggers one of the students to propose a topic which is accepted by the others. In addition, the teacher orients the student to the task requirement that they had to produce an outline by the end of the class, thus, urging them to move faster and not to forget the task goal.

It appears that the teacher has paid attention to the students and that her scaffolding strategies discussed above have helped the group to complete the task effectively. In this case, it seems that the teacher’s role is a ‘catalyst’ in that the students somehow ‘got lost’ along the discussion and the teacher helps them to get back on the right track through assistance.

Excerpt 5.17 Teacher scaffolding

Turns/Text	Interactional Functions
1. Teacher: what topics have you thought of?	QUES
2. Jan: persuade people not to exercise!	RESP
3. Teacher: isn't that a bit unethical (.) it's unethical	EVA
4. Jan: or (.) persuade [Thais not to travel abroad]	DIV
5. Teacher: why?	QUES
6. Jan: waste of money (.) better travel within Thailand (.) in the country	RESP
7. Teacher: c'mon (.) for real (.) what's your topic?	QUES
8. Vinny: can't think of any	RESP
9. Jan: not to exercise ((laughing))	RESP

10. Teacher: well (.) if you REALLY want this topic (.) you can persuade people not to join the fitness center (.) look (.) you have to care about what you're talking about	EXPD and SUGG
11. Nan: [oh (.) persuade people not to date many girls n boys same time]	RESP
12. Teacher: think of something you don't like	SUGG
13. Jan: rapes (.) rapes (.) scary	RESP
14. Teacher: you have to submit an outline today ok	EXPLA-
15. Pin: oh (.) or persuade [people danger of wearing contact lense]	ADD
16. Jan: ((sighing))  ((Sound of pen clicking))  ((4-5 minutes of silence))	
17. Nan: [persuade people not to believe in (.) going to see fortune teller (.) not to completely believe in what fortune teller say and let that influence our life (.) our decision (.) for me (.) I use my judgement too (.) I don't believe hundred percent fortune tellers say]  ((Silence))	EXPD
18. Vinny: [but how are we gonna create] credibility [about this?]	QUES-EXPD
19. Nan: [for fortune telling and horoscopes (.) I feel we have to persuade people to change attitudes]	EXPD
20. Jan: ok [//what are the things that you will include//?]	QUES
21. Nan: [//that people shouldn't believe everything//]	RESP
22. Vinny:[ hey (.) we have to write outline now]	Orienting peers towards task completion

Case2

# 5

## 5.7 Summary

In this chapter, I provided a cross-case analysis of all the group discussions that I observed in order to answer the RQs 1-4 (similar to Chapter 4; see research questions in Chapter 3). However, this chapter draws on an overall picture of how group discussions develop. Some of the factors that emerged from this chapter are that some interactional strategies (e.g. diverging; accelerating discussions) which seem to promote the group discussions might hinder the progress of the discussions if overused or used at the 'wrong time'. In addition, two major factors that contributed to the effectiveness of group interactions are the use of L1 during the discussions and teacher scaffolding (e.g. orienting students towards the tasks, providing appropriate vocabulary for the students). In the next chapter, I discuss the links between the group interaction tasks and the oral presentations. Also, in order to support my interpretations discussed in this chapter, the students' perceptions towards the group discussion in relation to the oral presentations will also be taken into account.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Bridging Group Interactions to Oral Presentations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present an analysis of the group discussions of the three cases under investigation. My first aim is to find out whether or not student-student scaffolding during the process of the discussion has an influence on the quality of the presentation or not. My second aim is to find out from the students, what in their group discussion was important to the quality of the oral presentation. Hence, answering the two research questions as follows: RQ 5: In what ways is the collaboration related to the oral presentations, and RQ 6: What factors during the group discussion do students perceive to hinder or promote the quality of the oral presentation? In analysing the oral presentations, I have applied the lexical signals introduced by Tadros (1985, 1989, and 1994 in Boyle, 1996) that Boyle discussed in his work. The data in the present chapter comprise of excerpts from the group discussion transcripts, and from the oral presentations, as well as excerpts from some students' stimulated recalls. I present excerpts of the group discussion transcripts and the oral presentations of Case 1 whose topics are 'Disadvantages of being in a relationship' and 'UFOs', followed by Case 3: 'Getting a guy' and Case 2: 'Fun trip on the island' and 'Fortune telling and horoscopes' respectively.

#### **6.2 Case 1: Disadvantages of being in a relationship'**

Below, I present excerpts from the group discussion of Case 1 (the students are working on the group discussion, informative speech (IS)). The excerpts I present are taken from the second and the last group discussion for the first task where they have to submit their outline at the end of class. The group's topic is 'Disadvantages of being in a relationship'). The students are Robert, Pat, Andy and Tom and they are brainstorming the ideas for the outline. In my analysis, I will pinpoint crucial points of the group interaction which may have influenced the quality of the oral presentation. Excerpt 6.1 below is an illustration of how the students in Case 1 collaboratively work together.



I would analyse briefly the extract of the group discussion and the oral presentation by applying the conversation analysis approach and will also add the students' perceptions to support my analyses. Pat, saying out loud the potential topics seems to indicate that she wants further opinions or questions from other group members. It can be seen in the excerpt that it triggers Andy to seek explanation on the concept of 'change'. With the overlap (turn 74) and latches in turns 75 and 76, it indicates that the students are providing mutual help. Also in the 'writing introduction' stage, the students still collaboratively contribute to how they should start the introduction (see turns 138-147). In turn 150, Robert reminds his group members to remember the transitions when each of them gives the speech.

Next, I analyse the oral presentation in order to see the connection between the discussion and the end product. Each student presented their part for about 3-4 minutes by following the outline that they had produced after the group discussion. I have taken small excerpts from each of the students' presentation and found that the ideas that they came up with were divided among themselves (see Excerpt 6.2). Looking at Pat's introduction, it seems that she has created her own introduction but referring back to the discussion, the group wanted to start off with a 'question' (see turns 138-140, Excerpt 6.1). Hence, Pat did not seem to take on board what was agreed during the discussion and it seems she came up with a totally different introduction by herself. In addition, though Robert, did remind his peers about the transitions, it seems that the students did not link their parts in the speech to the previous student's part. For example, there is no evidence of any links between Robert, who talked about 'boundaries' and Tom, who talked about the concept of 'change'. In line with Robert's earlier advice, Tom could have provided a one-sentence summary of what Robert presented (two other students could have done the same too, see lines 1, 4, 7, and 10). This very much reminds me of when I write my dissertation in which I have to link one section to another for coherence. I believe it works the same way in terms of group presentation where the smoothness of the speech is crucial.

### Excerpt 6.1 'Disadvantages of being in a relationship'

#### Informative Speech (IS) Group discussion : Writing an outline

73 Robert: we can brainstorm the outline(.) would be better(.) then we decide on like topics(.) that we wanna talk about  
74 Pat: =ok (.) I agree with Robert (.) ok (.) there's money (.) commitment(.) opportunities(.) boundaries(.)getting along with parents and friends(.) hmm(.) health problem(.) extra work(.) attachment(.) uh(.) and change=  
75 Andy: change(.) explain //change//  
76 Pat: //change//(.) it's like how you have to change yourself to fit with the other person without argument  
77 Tom: =change=  
78 Robert: ok(.) we'll pick change for one

(Case 1, Discussion #2)

#### Later, writing an introduction

135. Robert: main points are (.) yeah (.) I (.) I actually think that while she's writing (.) I think that we should to(.) start the introduction  
136. Andy: we're still in the introduction right (.) right?  
137. Robert: yeah  
138. Tom: we can't do like (.) question first? And then we think our question in the introduction (.) 'have you ever' and then  
139. Robert: =are you asking the audience for opinion?=  
140. Tom: yeah (.) but we don't need for the answer (.) but just ask(.) ask(.) people(.) just make them like(.)  
141. Robert: =make them like(.) feel(.) like(.) think(.) yeah=  
142. Tom: =thinking (inaudible) you know (.) (inaudible) at the same time=  
143. Pat: =make it really (.) like a deep thought (.) you know like (.) uh(.) are you in a relationship?=  
144. Robert: (inaudible)  
145. Pat: =are you happy with it?=  
146. Robert: =are you depress?=  
147. Pat: = no (.) have you ever?=  
148. Robert: =yeah yeah yeah (.) we gotta do all that=  
149. Andy: (inaudible)  
150. Robert: and she wants us (.) to like have to (.) before we pass on(.) like finish the introduction right(.) we have to like(.) pass it on to  
151. Pat: =the transition=  
152. Robert: =yeah(.) transition(.) we cannot forget(.) that's pretty much it=

(Case1, discussion # 3)

### Excerpt 6.2 Oral Presentation: Informative Speech

#### Pat:

1 Life is not all beneficial (.) it's all about pros and cons (.) it is true that (.) it is believed that we need someone to love  
2 to make our life worthwhile (.) I believe (.) I personally believe (.) I find that we give so much more than what we  
3 receive so in our life (.) we give in return for something (.)...

#### Robert:

4 Since boundaries is the main (.) are one of the main factors that we believe as the disadvantages of a relationship (.)  
5 boundaries (.) I'm talking about (.) rules and opportunities (.) with rules (.) boundaries are (.) I'll give you an example  
6 of what I'm talking about so...

#### Tom:

7 Changing yourself is one of the point that um(.) some people (.) when they have a relationship with someone (.) you  
8 might not know that you change but you may know by people or friend tell you (.) by people around you (.) um (.)  
9 changing yourself in the lifestyle (.) for example...

#### Andy:

10 I'm going to be talking about the uh (.) consequence (.) and the process of breaking up (.) after a serious relationship  
11 (.) the process of breaking up (.) you have to suffer the consequences and (.) the suffering (.) and the reason why you  
12 break up (.) and sometimes the reason can be crucial...



In terms of the students' perceptions, it can be noted that the students were satisfied with the group interaction task as Andy said:

*"what I think of group work is, it involves team work so I think of the advantages of group work is that you can absorb ideas from other people when compared to studying alone, you just rely on your own ideas"*

(Stimulated recall, 14/11/05)

*" group work helps, people come up with different ideas and when we compare ideas and then prepare for it (.) makes you more confident with what you're presenting(.) saying..."*

(Stimulated recall, 23/11/05)

Robert also added:

*"it's nice that we got our work done, we now know what we're gonna say (.) talk about like instead of having that little piece of paper with little amount of ideas, but now we know what we like wanna talk about and now we can go in depth"*

(Stimulated recall, 14/11/05)

The excerpt from the oral presentation above, along with the perceptions of the students also reveal that the students felt more confident when delivering the presentations after the group discussion. Hence, development of confidence when students give presentations seem to be an important factor that emerged. They also agreed that there was mutual help among the group members. Having said this, when I asked how each student felt during the presentation, the two common answers were stage fright and the lack of preparation as in the examples below:

*Pat: I admit that I was prepared but I guess it's stage fright (.) no matter how prepared you are (.) the stage fright prevented me from presenting well (.) effectively*

*Tom: I'm just not used to standing behind the podium, so I hide my nervousness by using more hand gestures*

*Robert: I know that if I was prepared, I wouldn't like say as much 'like' if I prepare for it. I was prepared I know what I'm gonna say (.) there'll be less 'like'. I know the point to say but I didn't write it out in order (.) I was just not well prepared.*

*Andy: for this presentation (.) I don't like it (.) it's just not my day (.) I didn't get enough sleep (.) if we prepared as a whole (.) we'll do much better...*

(Stimulated recall, 26/11/05)

Evidence from the interview seems to reveal that students in Case 1 seem to collaborate only in the brainstorming idea stage but there seems to be no mutual support for one another for the actual presentation. This is apparent from looking closely at the oral

presentation transcripts, in that the flow from one student's presentation to another was not as smooth as it should have been (see Excerpt 6.2). In addition, when looking at the micro level of analysis, it was found that, the group discussion did not seem to help Pat (see Excerpt 6.1). However, the ideas generated during the discussion are taken up by the students (Robert, Tom and Andy) and are expanded in the oral presentations.

### 6.2.1 'UFOs'

Next, I present the group discussion transcript of task two, the persuasive speech, and the oral presentation. The following transcript is taken from a group discussion (refer to Excerpt 4.1, Chapter 4 for detailed transcript). At this point, I analyse how one student, Tom, adopted the ideas from the group discussion and composed an organised speech.

#### Excerpt 6.3 Deciding on a topic

11 Robert: have you heard of Area 51 like in America (.) they say that in the dessert where they say where they like you know (.) they've seen aliens and UFOs

(Case 1, Discussion #4: Episode 'Which topic')

Later:

118Robert: there's this documentary (.) people went to this place and they got lost (.) never return

119Robert: pictures (.) and then we gotta find supporting materials

(Case 1, Discussion #4, Episode: 'Finalising the topic')

#### Excerpt 6.4 Oral Presentation (Persuasive Speech)

Tom:

1 50 years ago (.) this soldier called Robert (.) was disappear by following the UFO that the US air  
2force (.) command them to follow the object (.) and then the soldier follow and he disappear (.) and no  
3one see him or his body (.) and this one (.) the material that the government shows that UFO is the real  
4thing because at Area 51, support for the aliens because Area 51 is used to test many project (.)  
5secret plan like (.) FR 71, Blackbird and Aero Vertical (.) they also used to test Predator 11 2001-  
62002 against Alquida network..."

From the above example, it appears that Tom had taken up Robert's suggestions and used that information as part of his oral presentation. This is also an evidence of how the more capable peer (Robert) can assist the less capable peer (Tom). In this particular example, it can be seen that Tom, the presenter, has successfully put forward the points that were discussed into a well organised speech. From my observation, this particular group collaborates effectively in generating ideas with one another by having Robert acting as the 'leader' throughout the discussions (see section 4.3.1). In addition, it can



be seen that Tom also added specific examples (see lines 4-6), this reveals that with initial help from the group, he further was able to add more details on his own as Tom notes:

*"...supporting material are more important and it's good that we work in group (.) because (.) friend help find material (.) I don't have to find everything myself (.) group work also especially (.) help especially (.) outline stage (.) with group work (.) I get many of ideas (.) and that's good (.) it help you know (.) make me think (.) like about what other say (.) I get more idea for presenting"*

(Stimulated recall, 26/1/06)

Robert adds:

*"... like we share ideas and when sometimes we're stuck (.) a group member might point something out or slip certain things in (.) and we can take some of those ideas to put in (.) helps support what you're gonna say (.) yeah"*

(Stimulated recall, 26/1/06)

It seems to me that the group discussion has helped Tom in terms of organising ideas when he was working on his own and that, I believe was the result of sharing ideas with his peers. Once again, I noticed in Tom's interview a sense of 'confidence' that he obtains more ideas from his group members which I believe to provide a sense of assurance for Tom in the presentation stage. In the next section, I present i) a group discussion transcript and ii) the group's oral presentation from Case 3.

### 6.3 Case 3 'Getting a Guy'

As I read through and listened to Case 3's informative speech based from my own observations and from the teacher's assessments at the end of the oral presentations, the students seem to have taken on board what the teacher had taught in class. Their group presentations were the most cohesive in that the students seemed to have applied the oral presentation framework effectively as will be discussed in due course. Below are examples of the group discussion and the oral presentations from Case 3 (Excerpt 6.5) whose presentation is on 'How to get a guy in ten days'.



With the use of CA there were a number of latching (see turns 6-8; 35, 46, 50, 54) and overlaps (see turns 7-8; 36-37). I would like to draw close attention to turns 7-8 where there are occurrences of both latches and overlaps. The latches indicate that students are 'filling in the gap' for each other and the overlaps indicate a natural joint construction of the ideas which help the discussion to move forward. As can be seen that the students not only decided on the content but they also decided collaboratively on how to organise the presentation, hence helping one another compose the presentation script. In the beginning of the discussion, the students are talking about the introduction. Dawn contributes by suggesting an idea. Then in turn 10, Sally seems to contradict by pointing out to the group members that their introduction has to catch the audiences' attentions. Later, the students decided to compose the presentation script together and Wendy (see turn 39) contributed by giving an example. Towards the end of the discussion, more specific ideas were developed (see turns 49-54). Hence, it is apparent that the discussion gradually develops from 'general ideas' to more 'specific ideas' and finally the group collaboratively produce a very structured and well presented speech.

Hence, I present small excerpts of each student's presentation to illustrate how the discussion that progressed naturally was generated into to a cohesive formal speech. I applied Tadros' oral presentation framework (in Boyle, 1996; see Appendix 2.5) as it seems to be an appropriate framework to support assertions on the quality of the presentations.

It was found that the lexical signals introduced by Tadros (1985, 1989, 1994 in Boyle, 1996:120) were adopted by the students. For example, Wendy made use of the predictive signals by posing a question then followed by an enumeration (lexical signals are italicised; lines 1-2; 5-6). Moreover, the ideas developed in the collaborative task are carried over in the oral presentation (see lines 3-4 below and see turn 5, Excerpt 6.5).

#### Excerpt 6.6 Oral Presentation

Wendy:

1*Before I start the presentation I would like to ask you a question (.) have you found Mr. Right? .... Today*  
 2*our group will tell you how to get a guy in 10 day (.) um (.) you know why our group choose this topic (.)*  
 3*um (.) do you know that nowadays (.) girl more than guy and just you observer around yourself (.) just*  
 4*two guys right? And I think this topic will useful for you for right now or in the future.... You can apply*  
 5*four steps to get a girl in girl in 10 days too (.) so our steps (.) there are five steps to get a guy in 10 day (.)*  
 6*first step is (.) getting his information (.) right (.) um (.) and in this step (.) you have to know first (.) first*  
 7*thing (.) his name...*

#### Excerpt 6.5 "How to get a guy in 10 days"

##### a. Beginning

3. Sally: we can say like (.) em (3) ((thinking)) introduction right (.) n we'll talk about our experience n we don't need to (inaudible) to set it chronological order (.) is it ok? So we can see like (.) first (.) first thing (.) you should ask question then (.) 2<sup>nd</sup> step
4. Wendy: (inaudible) I don't know how we (.) explain the method in the body (.) the way we talk about (.) which method do we use?
5. Dawn: for this (.) cannot use (.) 'today I would like to present about...' so we have to think about another sentence (.) it's like (.) but like I said to you (.) we say blah blah blah and then last sentence we say our topic is... hmmm (.) so this will be the statistics about guys vs. the girl (.) so (.) like nowadays we have more guys than the girl blah blah (.) so today we will help you to get a guy in 10 days (.) alright?
6. Wendy: ah ha (.) so maybe in the middle we have to say that (.) based on our //experience//
7. Dawn: ==//experience// (.) it's gonna be work (.) if you use this=
8. Wendy: ==//technique//=
9. Dawn: so (.) 'today we help (.) we gonna help you to get a guy in 10 days' (.) is this correct one?
10. Sally: I'm not sure about this the beginning of topic because right here is (.) tell your audience what your topic is or (.) why the audience should (.) should like (.) listen to you ((referring to the text book)) um (.) it's like

##### b. Later

33. Dawn: but today we'll talk about the outline first or presentation first?
34. Wendy: presentation first
35. Dawn: =first (.) main points= (.) right?
36. Sally: //yeah//
37. Wendy: //yeah//
38. Dawn: we begin with first main point (inaudible)
39. Wendy: I think I will (inaudible) about um (.) um (.) the reason (.) like when I like a guy right (.) I will look at him when he walk past (.) or when do activity or anything (.) I know him (.) but he didn't (.) doesn't know me and someday I went to talk to him (.) and first of all I have to make sure that this guy like (.) didn't have a girlfriend like (.) at that time right (.) after that I will ask my friend to (.) to (.) talk with him (.) ask my friend to tell him I want to talk with the guy (.) something like that (.) it's like getting information about the guy
40. Sally: yeah

##### c. Later

45. Dawn: how about (.) if you (.) experience (.) tell all of details (.) after getting information (.) what do you do after?
46. Wendy: =ah ha=
47. Sally : um (.) then 'step by step' (.) yeah (.) you said ((to Dawn))
48. Dawn: first (.) getting information (.) second smile (.) and be friends with the guy  
((Teacher approaches to check how the students are doing ))
49. Dawn: actually (.) right here ....
50. Wendy: =over here= ((pointing on paper)) (.) it's more like they are about to become boyfriend and girlfriend already b  
but here
51. Sally: this one's the initial stage (.) start flirting
52. Wendy: yeah (.) [so after become girlfriend boyfriend] (.) try to make him know your mind
53. Dawn: try to get to know each other more
54. Wendy: =yeah yeah=

#### Case 3, Discussion # 2



In the next excerpt, Dawn made use of lexical signal, 'advance labelling' followed by the signalling relations lexical parallelism and lexical repetition (lines 10-12). Similarly, Sally also applied the advance labelling technique. Again, there is clear evidence that the natural conversation in the group interaction has been generated into a formal speech. For example, Wendy suggests about how to get a guy's attention..." the reason (.) like when I like a guy right (.) I will look at him when he walk past (.) or when do activity or anything (.) I know him (.) but he didn't (.) doesn't know me and someday I went to talk to him (turn 39 above) and in the presentation, the formal version, "I will tell you how to appear in his world..."(see lines 9-11). Hence, it is an important evidence that the students are able to adapt their 'natural and informal' language into a 'formal' language used in delivering speeches.

**Dawn:**

8Well, second step is (.) getting his attention after you got his information (.) his information (.) well (.)  
9you have to appear in his world (.) do not be invisible girl in his world but how? (.) *I will tell you how*  
10 *to appear in his world* because I used to do this also (.) *first step* use the information such as where and  
11when will he be and then you try to always be there.... *Second* (.) three four day later (.) you have to  
12*smile* to him (.) just a *smile* (.) *smile* (.) and *third step* (.) you walk past him (.) you *smile* and say hi (.)  
....

**Sally:**

13*I'll talk about the last step to get a guy* (.) *the last step is being yourself*.... *I got two situations to tell*  
14 *you* (.) *first situation* is like (.) um you find out that he like the sweet and pretty nice type of girl and  
15 wear long (.) pink and talk polite and walk nice and do everything nice and the next day you come to  
16 see him (.) like all pink and long dress skirt and nice t-shirt (.) but your hair doesn't seem to suit your  
17 dress at all... *the second situation* is (.) um (.) he asks you to decide on two things (.) whether you  
18 want to eat at McDonalds or Kentucky Chicken (.) don't say " anything", or it's up to you...

### Case 3 (Informative Speech)

To sum up, the three types of lexical signals, "enumeration" "advance labelling" and "question" as well as the lexical repetition and grammatical and lexical parallelism applied by the students have proved to make their oral presentation to be comprehensive and cohesive. It can also be seen that the cohesion is found in all three students' speeches which means that they have collaboratively construct the presentation together (see Excerpt 6.6). In the next section, I present a 'less effective' oral presentation from Case 2 ('On the island') in comparison to the first two cases.



#### 6.4 Case 2: 'On the Island'

In this section, I analyse the data from Case 2 (see Excerpt 6.7). In the first part of the analysis, I will show how and why Case 2's IS exemplifies less effective group interaction resulting in less effective speech. By analysing less effective interaction I will attempt to determine whether those interactions that lead to failure in scaffolding during the discussion actually resulted in a less effective presentation. I will also use the less effective interaction to reflect those which contribute to scaffolding and to a successful speech. In the second part of this section, I will provide data from the same group's persuasive speech which exemplifies effective speech. I will provide a comparative analysis within the same case and try to determine some factors in the preparation stage which may have affected the final product. In Excerpt 6.7 the students are preparing an outline for the presentation which they have to submit at the end of the class. The students are discussing how to divide the activities that they did together on the island. They came up with the topic because it is a place that the group members went together on a holiday.

As can be seen from the discussion, it was not as collaborative as in the other two cases. Although the students seemed to collaborate with one another, it was found that only two students kept the discussion moving (Nan and Jan), whereas from the counts of turns, Pin and Vinny rarely contributed to the group (both Pin and Vinny contributed only once). Moreover, the students could have questioned each other more because it seems that they are just listing what they did on the island. For example, from turns 68-71 the students seem to be informing of the 'obvious' facts about the scenery and water fall. They could have expanded each other's ideas more into what makes the island different from other islands. Then in turns 55-59 either Nan or Jan could have added more details about the activities other than just listing what they did on the island. Also, from the transcript (turns 65-66), the students tend to go off task by talking about personal matters, hence, their concentration is not fully on the task. This is a recurrent pattern that I have found from my observations with this particular group of students where the students tend to joke around with each other more than concentrating in completing the task (see observation note below):

**Observation note:** The group tends to talk about other stuff before getting started. I looked at the time, took them nearly 10 minutes before they actually settle down. *I'm starting to worry if they'll get their work done in time!!!!* Towards the middle of the discussion, they joke around with one another now and then, they don't seem to be serious about their work at all. *I'm really starting to worry about them...*

(Observation, 14/11/05)

#### Excerpt 6.7: Fun Trip on the Island (Writing an Outline)

55.Jan: [two days(.) like (.) activities we mainly did were for two days(.) ok(.) let's start again(.)snorkeling(.) and swimming(.) one activity(.) kayaking(.) one(.) so there are]  
56.Nan: [how about]= two major activities=  
57.Jan: =ok=  
58.Nan: there are two major of activities according to the first day and second day  
59.Jan: [we'll just write] (.) the activities include two days  
60. Nan: the activities are included(.) the activity included  
61.Jan: =the activity included= (.) two day in Kood<sup>17</sup> Island ((writing)) [separate?]  
62.Nan: =are divide in 2 -day trip=  
63.Jan: =[yeah yeah (.) into](.) into 2 day right?=((writing))  
64.Nan: main point ((referring to textbook))  
65.Jan: [who went out with you guys last night?]  
66.Nan: [a couple of friends (.) so (.)]  
67.Jan: [so here](.) main points (.) so day one(.) they are  
68.Pin: take photo  
69.Jan: with beautiful hmmm (.) view  
70.Nan: view (.) scenery (.) [means beautiful view]  
71.Jan: visit (.) visit water fall ((writing))  
72.Nan: [say] (.) visit the island water fall (.) [don't forget] appostrophe  
73.Jan: day 2(.) kayaking?  
74.Nan: [you didn't write] hiking  
75.Jan: [you came back at 1 a.m.?]  
76.Nan: [yeah(.) day 2](.) kayak(.) snorkeling  
77.Jan: nearby island ((writing))  
78.Vinny: =the island near by=  
79.Nan: swimming  
80.Jan: swimming in the sea(.) at night ((writing))  
81.Nan: and see fireflies and plankton at night

Case, 2 Discussion # 3

<sup>17</sup> Kood Island is the name of an island in Thailand. In this case it is the island that the students spent their holiday together.



In order to show the link between the group discussion and the students' performance on the oral presentation, I now present short excerpts of each student's presentation which seems to be unorganised and lacks cohesion.

Looking at the presentation in Excerpt 6.8, it is apparent the students are just 'listing' what they did on the island (e.g. see lines 8-14; 15-19). In addition, apart from Pin, who seemed to employ the 'question' lexical signal in the beginning of her speech, the presentation seemed difficult for the audience to follow as there was no 'advanced labelling' (e.g. I want to show...; I would like to...) to prepare the audience. For instance, Jan could begin her speech by using advanced labelling strategy (line 15). As for Vinny, her conclusion did not seem to summarise the whole presentation (lines 20-24). She could have employed the 'lexical repetition' strategy in her conclusion by repeating what her three members have talked about as a recap for the audience. The data also reveals that the students themselves were also not satisfied with their performances, most of them thought they did not prepare well for the speech as illustrated below (see also section 6.2 above):

Jan: "I'm not satisfied (.) I don't think we prepared well, played around too much..."

Nan: "Yeah, we could do better, I think (.) I didn't do well"

Vinny: "but for me, it's because I'm nervous, when I speak but yeah (.) depends on preparation too (.) I don't think the topic is good enough (.) I don't know....it's just hard too (.) we didn't follow the text book

Jan: "before presenting (.) we have to rearrange and be more organised but didn't have time to do

(Stimulated Recall, 24/11/05)

From the students' comments, it is clear that the factors in the preparation phase which they perceived as negatively affecting the quality of their speech are:

1. playing around too much
2. choosing an inappropriate topic (e.g. topic not good enough)
3. not following the textbook
4. not allocating sufficient time to organise before the presentation

In addition, a recurrent pattern that emerges is the problem in organising the speech in which students in Case 1 also experienced as Pat mentioned, "we didn't prepare so we jump around" and Robert also added, "...if I know what I was gonna say like(.) in chronological order (.) then I think I would be

able to do better than this... problem is organisation, I guess".

#### Excerpt 6.8 Oral Presentation (Informative Speech)

Pin:

1Have you ever visit the place where there are both the waterfall and the sea (.) where you can snorkel and see plenty of  
2fish (.) imagine you are on the bus on the way to Koh Kood (.) so today we will take you, adventure people, around the  
3Koh Kood Island (.) so everyone might wonder why we choose Koh Kood (.) because we went to the Tourism of  
4Authority of Thailand exhibition so there (.) one promotion about um (.) we found a package 3 day 2 nights at cheap  
5price (.) because this is promotion of Monday-Thursday (.) Koh Kood is located near Chang Island (.) and Koh Kood is  
6the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest island in Thailand (.) there are only one waterfall near the how to get there (.) we must to take the bus and  
7will take you around 4 hours to get 8there...now Nan will talk about the activities

Nan:

8Our first day activity (.) there are 3 activity on 1<sup>st</sup> 18day trip (.) first activity is (.) take photo (.) this one (referring to  
9picture) we're still on the car (.) when we reach Kood Island (.) we see (.) Kood island (.) very beautiful scenery (.) so  
10reach there and surprise to see many things and we want to take this view (.) and that view (.) uh (.) it also has a  
11beautiful private beach (.) then we (.) next visit (.) we went to the waterfall nearby (.) near our resort and the hotel guide  
12(.) when we were reach (.) when it's take about (.) uh (.) eight from hotel to reach the waterfall and we need to walk  
13two kms. To reach the waterfall and when we reach there we wear the jacket suit (.) uh (.) life suit (.) uh (.) life jacket (.)  
14to play in the water (.) swimming and then the hotel guide (.) one man (.) he going up to the top of water fall and jump...

Jan:

15Uh (.) about 2<sup>nd</sup> day in Koh Kood uh(.) the first is kayak (.) you can play kayak (.) kayak boat to the sea (.) and feel the  
16adventure experience with your friends (.) uh (.) especially in the evening when the sea is (.) uh (...) wave (.) there has a  
17wave in the sea uh(.) uh (.) for people who cannot swim (.) you will feel more adventure than others because you will  
18think (.) I will die or not because the wave is very high (.) 2<sup>nd</sup> one is scuba diving (.) scuba diving (.) we have the (.) the  
19guide go to scuba diving in the sea (.) near the island (.) you can see schools of fish (.) and plenty of fish ...

Vinny

20For the person who interested in our trip (.) uh our trip(.) uh (.) each person on our trip use only 3000 baht (.) include all  
21meal uh (.) and activities and transportation uh (.) it's very cheap uh because we eat a lot and many activity that we did  
22uh (.) for this trip (.) uh (.) I think we get (.) we got a lot of things (.) we had fun (.) and we learn more about each other  
23(.) and indirect way (.) we can help Thailand uh (.) for uh (.) help people to have a job (.) uh (.) the people at Koh Kood  
24(.) uh (.) they treat us like a family.

Note: Koh Kood is the name of an island in Thailand

Case 2



As mentioned earlier in section 5.3.4, the students seemed to struggle with figuring out what they had to include in their speech. It seems that these factors may have negatively influenced the quality of their speech. In the next chapter, I will argue that language teachers should pay more attention to the process of the group discussion and use group presentation tasks for the purpose of formative assessment. I will do this by engaging recent work such as that of Rea-Dickins (2001) and Fulcher (1996).

From investigating the group discussion it appears that evaluative comment or formative assessment during the group interaction seemed to be underemphasised during the group interaction tasks. As evidenced in Excerpt 5.17 (turns 1, 3, 5, 7, 10 and 14) the teacher's role was mainly giving students general directions on generating ideas and orienting them to the task. This is because according to the course objective, teachers are concerned with the end product in which both the summative and formative assessments took place only after the students have delivered the oral presentations (the teacher talked to each group at the end of the session) as evidenced by my observation notes below:

#### Observation notes:

After the oral presentations, the teacher asked the groups who have delivered their speeches to discuss with her on their performances. The teacher gave them some feedback and with Case 2, the teacher was not very satisfied with them, she gave comments like, 'there were no transitions between each person. She also said something like, 'you have to improve on .... I hope you'll improve in the next oral presentation.

*I thought to myself, I think what the teacher is doing is a good strategy because it will help the students to improve on their later tasks, but somehow, I still feel that had the teacher given more feedback during the discussion, it would be more beneficial to the students. Evaluation seems to be taking place only at the end. I don't think it's enough.*

(Observation, 22/11/05)

This is an important issue to make note of where the teacher is normally seen as the 'final assessor' especially in the Thai educational system. I hope to discuss the issue further in the next chapter<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> An evidence of 'formative assessment' emerged during the course of the observation of this study but the concept of assessment is not part of the research questions so it is discussed in this chapter briefly. Therefore, issues on assessments will be discussed in Chapter 7 as implications for further studies.



#### 6.4.1 Fortune telling and horoscopes

Interestingly, in the second task (PS) the same group (Case 2) seemed to improve remarkably. Here, I provide transcripts from the discussion and the persuasive speech, followed by analysis of the factors in the speech which make it an effective one and factors in the interaction during the preparation phase that may have contributed to the effectiveness of the speech. Another factor could be that the students might have sensitised to the issues through participating in the research which raised their awareness to perform the tasks effectively.

Excerpt 6.9 reveals that the students' questioning of each other may have affected the development of the ideas throughout the discussion and thus improve the quality of the speech. For example, in turn 36, Jan asks her peers for the details that they would include in the presentation, and in turn 43, Pin asks about how they are to go about in presenting the topic. From these two examples, it seems that the students' discussion seems to develop in two different levels. They are not are just simply talking about the content of the speech but the discussion is also on the strategy of the delivery (in contrast with the first task where the discussion consisted of simply listing the activities that they did on the island (see excerpt 6.7). Negotiating the strategy of delivery is exemplified in turn 54 by Vinny who says, "what shall we say". By using the pronoun "we" Vinny provides an important indication of 'collaboration' which in turn promoted her peers to contribute to the discussion, hence, employing a collective orientation (Storch, 2001).

#### Excerpt 6.9 Fortune-telling and Horoscopes (Writing an Outline)

33. Nan: [persuade people not to believe in (.) going to see fortune teller (.) not to completely believe in what fortune teller say and let that influence our life (.) our decision (.) for me (.) I use my judgement too (.) I don't believe hundred percent fortune tellers say]  
(Silence)
34. Vinny: [but how are we gonna create] credibility [about this?]
35. Nan: [for fortune telling and horoscopes (.) I feel we have to persuade people to change attitudes]
36. Jan: ok [what are the things that you will include?]
37. Nan: [=that people shouldn't believe everything=]
38. Vinny: [hey (.) we have to write outline now]
39. Jan: ok (.) ok (.) [what's the topic? Superstitions what's superstitions in English?]  
(asking researcher)
40. Researcher: umm (.) superstitions
41. Nan: horoscopes (.) isn't it? (talking to researcher)
42. Researcher: You can use that too
43. Pin: [but how are we going to present?]
44. Jan: [persuade people not to believe in the fortune teller (.) so topic is fortune teller (.) ok (.) then general purpose is]
45. Nan: [= can't we talk about everything related to horoscopes and fortune telling?]
46. Jan: [no (.) we have to limit the scope (.) so topic is horoscopes?]
47. Nan: ok (.) to persuade my audience not to believe in horoscopes and fortune tellers
48. Vinny: [both? That's it?]
49. Jan: [one is]
50. Nan: [=we determine our own fate=]
51. Jan: =there are(.) three ((writing)) there are three
52. Pin: =three what?]
53. Nan: =disadvantages (.) [usually] (.) general purpose is (.) to persuade (.) specific purpose= (inaudible) ((referring to text book))
54. Vinny: [what shall we say?]
55. Pin: some people go to fortune teller (.) just
56. Jan: =waste time right? ((writing))
57. Pin: =waste time and money=
58. Nan: [some people believe too much] (.) [they go crazy](.) waste time and money?
59. Jan: waste time and money (.) put together? ((writing))
60. Jan: //separate//
61. Vinny: //separate//
62. Nan: [how about]
63. Jan: superstitions? superstitions? (.) not to be ((writing))
64. Nan: no (.) superstitious (.) [use] 'too' (.) not t-o (.) to be(.) t-o-o (.) t-i-o-u-s

Case 2, Discussion # 5



Next, I present the students' persuasive speech to look for the links between the discussion and the presentation (Excerpt 6.10). Reading through the students' speech, it appears that it is much more effective than their previous one. The students apply the lexical signals 'questioning' and 'advanced labelling' and 'enumeration'. For example, Pat asks the audience a question in her introduction. Then Jan creates cohesion of the presentation by saying (line 10), "*I will support what Pat said*" using the 'advance labelling' technique. Jan further enumerates (line 10) "*first why does seeing fortune teller waste our time*" and lines (15-17) "*next point (.) we (.) when we waste time (.) we also waste our money because...*". These enumerations help to prepare the audience that they will be told of the reasons why it is a waste of time and money to see a fortune. The same is with Vinny and Nan where advanced labelling signalling is used consistently (see lines 19-20; 22-24) which makes the speech cohesive. When comparing the first presentation to the second one, it can be seen that there has been tremendous improvement on the performances. That is, the discussion was more collaborative and ideas were generated effectively and the oral presentation was delivered effectively. It is also crucial to include the students' perceptions. In what follows are excerpts from two students (from Case 2) of how and why they felt their performances have improved:

*Vinny: This time (.) we followed the structure in the book strictly (.) unlike last time so it helped a lot (.) from last time (.) we tried to correct our mistakes (.) for example transition (.) we didn't have proper transition last time (.) so group members help remind each other for example (.) for the introduction (.) I remind Pinny (.) who did the introduction not to forget to get audience's attention.*

*Nan: we also help each other edit the speech like suggest (.) change this and that (.) for example introduction should include this and that (.) give feedback like grammar—have, has, had*

(Stimulated Recall, 27/1/06)

*Vinny: when thinking of the topic (.) we tried to help each other (.) and also when writing outline (.) we have to come up with appropriate words/ vocabularies because many times we have trouble finding appropriate words for the topic (.) you know sometimes we know the Thai word for it but don't know how to say it in English (.) which word to use (.) this time I speak more (.) a lot more (.) I remember that the first presentation wasn't good (.) this time I see that we're all having trouble and having hard time finding appropriate words for the topic (.) and I feel I need to help my friends (.) I also want to make the presentation to turn out good too (.) I want a good topic (.) I felt that last time we just did not bother to find a real good topic*

(Stimulated Recall, 27/1/0

## Excerpt 6.10 Oral Presentation: Persuasive Speech

**Pat:**

1 Good afternoon class (.) today our group will persuade you on not to believe in horoscopes and fortuneteller. *Do you*  
2 *believe in horoscopes and have you ever go to see fortune teller?* Nowadays, people tend to go to see fortune teller (.)  
3 more and more everyday (.) because the technology in our life such as advertisement from TV or also cell phone (.)  
4 you just call the number and then you will know what will happen in the near future and your fate which they are  
5 automatic and also go to see fortune teller (.) read horoscopes from magazines and newspapers (.) we found that many  
6 time it is not true (.) they just guessing (.) uh (.) our life (.) so from my experience I went to see fortune teller (.) he  
7 said I will find soul mate in months (.) so I wait for him (.) till now (.) I have not met anyone so you can see that they  
8 are just guessing uh (.) so um (.) if you want to know why we want to persuade you not to believe in horoscopes and  
9 fortune teller you must listen to my friends (.) next, Jan will tell you that seeing fortune teller waste our time and our  
10 money

**Jan:**

10 *I will support what Pat said (.) first why does seeing fortune teller waste our time (.)* because in one day (.) you can  
11 do so many things (.) like you go to the university (.) fitness do assignments (.) but many of us say we have no time  
12 but many of you can spend three hours listen to what the fortune teller say (.) we think it waste your time very much  
13 (.) for example, one of my friend (.) Mr. A went to see fortune teller and fortune teller say he gonna die this month  
14 he said that that Mr. A must be a monk for 3 months and Mr. A believe and went to be a monk for 3 months (.) so  
15 you can see that it wastes the time (.)... (.) *next point (.) we (.) when we waste time (.) we also waste our money*  
16 *because like Pat says when you call and listen to fortune teller on the phone you don't even know them and we listen*  
17 *to them (.) how can they know you better than yourself?. It waste your money because it's expensive...*

**Vinny:**

18 As Jan has already said about how horoscopes and fortune teller *uh waste our money and our time (.)* now (.) being  
19 too superstitious (.) *I will show you my experience of being too superstitious (.)* my friend's mother went to see  
20 fortune teller and fortune teller say she will have accident so she went to pray to be out of misfortune.... so next, Nan  
21 will talk about we can predict our own fate and destiny

**Nan:**

22 *Ok (.) lastly (.) I will talk about the last disadvantage of believing in horoscopes and fortune teller (.) guiding our life*  
23 *(.) destiny (.)* I think life is indicated by ourself not others (.) it is innate (.) others cannot know even ourself... and  
24 finally conclude (.) *to conclude (.) believing in horoscopes is not useful for us because of the reasons that we discuss*  
25 *(.)* everyone please remember that you can try and see fortune teller but don't let it destroy your life and don't wait  
26 for the fate to come (.) your fate will be better or not depends on your performance and last (.) you control your own  
27 destiny.

Case 2



From Vinny's account, it appears that several factors in the group preparation were important in contributing to the quality of the speech. Some of these factors are put in juxtaposition to the ones which were lacking in the first task. They are:

1. followed the structure of the text book strictly
2. correct their previous mistakes (e.g. the transitions between each speaker)
3. group members help one another out (e.g. remind each other not to forget to get audiences' attentions; finding appropriate words for topic)

The factors mentioned above are the strategies that the students adopted to improve their oral presentation and which seems to work well for them. In addition, what emerges from Vinny's stimulated recall data is an evidence of self-assessment of both for herself and for the group when she said, "...we tried to correct our mistakes" and another is, "...I also want to make the presentation to turn out good too (.) I want a good topic (.) I felt that last time we just did not bother to find a real good topic". It appears that Vinny has used the first task to assess her own and the group's performance by reflecting and revealing 'what went wrong' with the first task. It seems to me that effective scaffolding seems to play an important role in 'self-assessment' as in an incident where the group is having difficulty in 'finding appropriate words/phrases' and Vinny felt that it was also her responsibility to help the group out, as she said " ... this time I speak more (.) a lot more and "... I feel I need to help my friends" (also see Vinny's account earlier, Interview 27/1/06). Hence, an interesting finding here is that through the course of the group interaction, Vinny took upon herself to be a self-evaluator in the second task. Vinny's comments also reveal that by contributing more to the discussion it could help the group to produce a better oral presentation and that mutual scaffolding is crucial. Hence, it is apparent that students not only teach each other but also assess one another. Also, the issue of 'confidence' seem to recur at this point where Vinny now takes the chance to contribute more to the discussion and have developed autonomously (see Chapter 7 for discussion).

From examining the group interaction transcripts and the oral presentations, it can be seen that there is a close link between the two, that one has an influence on another. The students also seem to be aware that whether their presentations will be good or not

depend on how collaborative they are with the group discussion. The question that comes to my mind is: why is it that classroom assessment is still focused heavily on assessing the 'product' and tends to ignore assessment of the 'process'. It is also evident in the study by Fulcher (1996) that the students view group discussions to be more 'natural' and that they enjoy the discussions (refer to 2.3.2c). Hence, I believe that students' preferences in task types would provide confident results in their performances.

## 6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I set out to analyse the links between the process (group discussion) to the product (oral presentation) by combining the data sets: group discussions, oral presentations and the stimulated recalls. The chapter draws on the influence the group interactions have on the end product (oral presentation). The students' perceptions were included in order to triangulate with my own interpretations of the data. The main factors that emerged were scaffolding help students to develop ideas and it was apparent that students made use of peers' suggestions and applied that in their presentations. Hence, when students collaboratively interact and construct the oral presentations together it leads to more comprehensive and cohesive oral presentations. As such, effective group interactions promote students to feel more confident in giving speeches. I also looked at the less effective group discussions and it was found that ideas were not fully developed as they did not employ the interactional strategies sufficiently in the discussion. Moreover, there are times when students 'go off the task' which hinders the progress of the discussions. As a result, the students' oral presentation performances were not as effective. However, the less effective discussions and oral presentation performances did have a positive effect in that the students paid more attention to previous mistakes and tried to improve on them in the second group task (IF). This is a valuable finding since it can be seen that the students learn to self assess their own performances and not having to rely only on the teacher. In the next chapter, I look at the findings as a whole and how they contribute to the knowledge of the field. I also provide recommendations for further research.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the relationship between the group interaction and the oral presentations. By investigating both the 'process' and the 'end product', it could provide the teachers to get better insights on how a joint activity can promote or hinder the end product (in this case, the oral presentation). In this chapter I provide i) an overview of the whole study and a discussion of its findings ii) a discussion of this study's contribution to the field and iii) a discussion of the limitations of this study and its implications for further research and professional development in the Thai HE context particularly in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and more widely.

#### **7.2 Summary of the study and its findings**

Following the social constructivism theoretical framework (see Chapter 3), in this study, I investigated university students' interaction during group discussion and its potential influence on the end product, which is the group oral presentations. The aims of the study were to better understand what is going on during group discussion and to examine what promote and hinder successful oral presentations and how students themselves may appropriate the means to further their own development. My research questions have focused on:

- a. how ideas are generated during group discussion (RQ1- How are ideas developed and generated in group interaction tasks?),
- b. evidence for collaboration and scaffolding between peers during group discussion (RQ 2- In what ways do students collaborate in group discussions? RQ3- Is there evidence of peer scaffolding in the group discussion tasks?; RQ4- What types of scaffolding do students provide for each other during the group discussion?),

- c. the relations between group discussion interaction and the final product of the oral presentation (RQ 5- In what ways is the collaboration related to the oral presentations?) and
- d. the students' perceptions of the factors in the group interaction that may have influenced their oral presentations RQ 6- What factors during the group discussion do students perceive to hinder or promote the quality of the oral presentations?).

To accomplish these specific objectives and answer the research questions, this research undertook an ethnographic case-study strategy by investigating three groups of undergraduate Thai students who were studying in the Public Speaking course. Data were collected through observations and stimulated recalls. The group discussions were analysed using conversation analysis techniques and by applying Tan's framework (2000; see Chapter 3: 60-61 and Appendix 2.2). The responses of the students from the stimulated recalls, the researcher's field notes and diary accounts were also analysed for the purpose of triangulation and transparency of the study.

### **7.3 Discussion of findings**

#### **7.3.1 Generating Ideas**

The first research question which guided the design and analysis of this study was:

*RQ 1 How are ideas developed and generated in group interaction tasks?* Findings from the three cases under investigation reveal that the initial step in generating ideas during group discussion was by suggesting ideas and topics that the students had prepared in advanced or thought of during the discussion. When generating ideas, students suggested topics from their personal experience and their interests (see for example Excerpt 5.1; turns 1-2; 11, 17). This finding may confirm the notion that students bring into the classroom different experience and ideas and here, they shared their experience during the interaction which appeared to be a crucial way in opening-up opportunities for 'collaborative talks'. However, the ideas that developed were diverse, depending on the similar or different experience and ideas of the students. Nevertheless, these students had one common goal which was to complete the task together and according to Wells



and Wells (1992) with the different perspectives of the students, it was crucial that they offer opinions and alternative suggestions during the talk. This leads on to the second stage of generating ideas in which the strategies that the students used were the interactional strategies that promote collaboration (adapted from Tan's idea framing taxonomy; see Appendix 2.2) and interactional strategies that promoted decision making (see section 5.4).

Generation of ideas was found to develop in various directions. This depended to some degree on the nature of their topic and the knowledge of each member on the topic. If one or two members could say a lot on the topic but the others could not, then the idea would not develop effectively and would likely be ignored (see Excerpt 5.1; turns 8-9; 20-28). On other occasions, it was found that when majority of the group members showed some interests and seemed to have sufficient knowledge on a topic, ideas were generated more in-depth. Hence, the discussions seemed to be collaborative where the students think and make decisions together (see example: Excerpt 4.8, turns 126-127; p83). As such, before the students can reach the final agreement, the ideas seemed to be generated in different directions. This finding is in line with previous finding (Tan, 2000; see page 39). The talk was also considered to be exploratory where different perspectives were offered (see Mercer, 1995).

Interestingly, questioning strategies seemed to be effective tools in the discussion and aimed at probing the participants' ideas and opinions (see section 5.3.6 Excerpt 5.4; turns 1, 3 and 6). Students asked each other for opinions, explanations and clarifications and adding on to each other's comments by accepting or disagreeing with their peers. Through questioning one another, it also triggers them to think more critically (see example Chapter 4). This result shows that the interactional strategy—questioning, seemed to be one of the most dominant strategy employed by the students which helped them to develop their cognitive thinking to a higher level as it opens up opportunities for the students to express their opinions and to learn from one another, hence bridging the gap of their own thinking with that of their peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

In cases where the idea generation did not end up in a group consensus, the teacher, who was checking on the students' progress would attend to their problems and inquiries, by

questioning and suggesting ideas. For example, in Case 2 the students were having difficulties in choosing a topic. The teacher, who listened to their discussion, asked them several genuine questions and also suggesting a way to reach a decision (see Excerpt 5.17, turns 1, 3, 4 and 5, 10). As Walsh (2002) says that it is crucial for a teacher to understand the interactional processes as it facilitates learning opportunity for the students. Teacher scaffolding is further discussed in subsection 7.3.4.

### 7.3.2 Collaborating in discussions

The second research question was as follows:

*RQ 2 In what ways do students collaborate in group discussions?*

This study's findings reveal that an effective strategy which appeared to promote collaboration was that one student appeared to self select himself/herself to act as group discussion leader. This helped to push the discussion forward effectively. This was clearly seen in Case 1 in which Robert seemed to take charge of the discussion by first calling the group's attention and then requesting for contributions from the group members (see Excerpt 4, turns 1 and 3). Students self-selecting themselves as leader can also be observed in Case 2 and 3. In Case 2, Jan seemed to be the dominant person in the discussion as she was usually the person to orient her peers to complete the task as mentioned in the analysis earlier (see Excerpt 5.13, turns 26 and 35) as this particular group were not as attentive towards completing the task. Hence, Jan seemed to be the person to remind her peers to concentrate on the discussion. In addition, in Case 3, there was also one student, Dawn, who seemed to dominate the group discussion where in Excerpt 5.8 Dawn took charge to manage the task more systematically. This result seemed to show that collaboration depends on leadership which was achieved through self-selection. As such, they recognize the value of taking charge of their own method of learning as suggested by Macaro (1997). Hence, I suggest that the students have achieved a sense of autonomy.

Findings reveal another important factor that promoted collaboration in the group discussion was through intersubjectivity or in other words, mutual understanding within the group members. In case 1, two students who persisted in getting genuine agreement from other peers seemed to have created a collaborative dialogue. One student was



trying to get his peers to make the decision together (see Excerpt 4.9, turns 138-140). Hence, they are said to be engaged in solving the problem and building the knowledge together (Donato, 1994; Swain, 2000). In line with Anton and Dicamilla (1999), where there is 'collaboration' during a group discussion, there seemed to be a mutual understanding among the group members or what Gee (2003 in Donato, 2004) refer to as 'group affinity'. As such, intersubjectivity plays an important role in promoting the group in jointly constructing the group's plans or activities. This leads on to my next two research questions in which I discuss the evidences and the types of peer scaffolding that emerged from the data.

### **7.3.3 Peer scaffolding in action**

Another set of findings which have emerged from the data aimed at answering the two research questions below:

*RQ 3 Is there evidence of peer scaffolding in the group discussion tasks?*

*RQ 4 What types of scaffolding do students provide for each other during the group discussion?*

Findings emerging from current study's data show that in all three cases, there was evidence of peer scaffolding where the students helped one another in completing the tasks from generating ideas, to writing the outlines and the scripts for the oral presentations (see examples: Case 1-Excerpt 5.6, Case 2-Excerpt 5.14 and Case 3-Excerpt 5.5). The findings accord with previous studies (e.g. Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; and DiCamilla, 1991; Storch, 2000) in which scaffolding seemed to occur routinely as the students work together in a task. Moreover, co-construction of ideas appeared to lead to extension of knowledge which helps in the development in the ZPD. The findings in relation to scaffolding have been presented in Chapters 4-6. To answer RQ 4, the types of scaffolding the students employed are discussed in detail below.

#### *Peer scaffolding through interactional strategies*

Patterns of the group interactions that have emerged from each case and across cases reveal that some of the interactional strategies employed by the students proved to be crucial strategies in scaffolding. This finding is an extension of the study by Tan (2000) where she focused on idea generation but did not relate to the concept of scaffolding. In

the present study, I have put forward Tan's idea framing taxonomy and relate them to scaffolding (see Chapter5).

The study reveals that the interactional strategies that promote collaboration were employed throughout the group discussions in all the stages of the tasks (e.g. finding the topic, writing an outline and preparing the oral presentation script). As mentioned earlier, students co-construct ideas collectively through questioning, probing and offering each other ideas. I have also suggested in the analysis that this kind of talk is similar to exploratory talk (Mercer, 1996) in which knowledge is built through reasoning (see section 5.3.7, p.97). Moreover, it was found that through series of adding on to one another's utterances as well as expanding and explaining each others' contributions, 'in depth' ideas were developed (Tan, 2000; see Excerpt 5.1). The finding is, moreover, in line with previous studies (e.g. Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Anton and DiCamilla, 1999).

Collaboration with critical judgements and evaluations that the students employed (Tan, 2000 calls it the 'reactive framing of ideas) also seemed to play important roles in the discussion. That is, the students did not accept their peers' contributions immediately but they would 'contradict' 'evaluate' or 'question' for further clarifications and justifications (see Excerpt 5.1; turns 9 and 15; also turns 20 and 26). Further clarifications and justifications on what the students were talking about seemed to result in that the students were able to explore their ideas more critically together (see 5.3.5). Questioning once again, seemed to play a significant role in the discussion as it served as a tool in prompting and triggering contributions from the students in the group. It is also said to be an important strategy to invite other listeners to participate in the task (Anton and DiCamilla, 1999; also see 5.3.6). Hence, through questioning one another, students were developing the pedagogical potential of the task and were learning collaboratively without the guidance of the teacher.

#### *Peer scaffolding in writing*

Even though the focus of investigation is on the discussion and the oral presentation, findings provide evidence of students thinking together while composing collaboratively the outlines for the presentations. It was found that during the writing



stage, 'finding the right choice of words' seemed to recur (see example Excerpt 5.6). Again, evidence of scaffolding by completing each other's utterances was observed. Also, in line with Storch (2001) and Guerrero and Villamil (1994) joint construction was also observed during the writing stage in which Storch called the process as language related episode (LRE) where learners talk about or question their own language use or that of others. At this point, using the conversation analysis approach revealed the process of how the students tried to find the right terms/lexical items by looking at the overlaps and latches during the talk (see 5.3.8, p.98). Also, in line with (Swain, 2000), the task encouraged students to reflect on language form and also being oriented to meaning making which is particularly useful in language development.

#### *Scaffolding through peer management (decision making)*

Task management within the group also played an important part which seemed to influence the students to accomplish the task effectively. Students come to class with different educational backgrounds and experience, hence it is likely that their opinions and perspectives would vary. For example, in Case 2 there were times when the students distract each other rather than contribute to the discussions (see Excerpt 5.13). It was important that one of the group members (Jan) managed and controlled the discussion (by saying, for example, 'serious please' and 'stop playing'). Other times, there are external factors such as time constraints and other tasks (e.g. writing an outline and the oral presentation scripts) the students had complete so the discussion had to be accelerated in order to get all the tasks done on time (see 5.4.3 for example). Previous studies (e.g. Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995) have placed emphasis on scaffolding in relation to the language use and language development but how the students make decisions together and how they manage the tasks collectively has rarely been the focus of analysis. The current findings suggest that task management strategies are required of the students when working in groups in order to complete the task.

#### *Scaffolding through the use of L1*

Another set of findings from the current study is the use of L1 during the discussion. The students under observation tended to use L1 to scaffold one another. From my observations, it appeared that when the students had difficulties expressing themselves in English or certain vocabulary words, they normally switch to L1 (Thai). It was also



observed that the scaffolded help with the use of L1 was to work effectively in the ZPD, evaluate the content of the discussion and to construct a shared perspective of the tasks (see section 5.5). Thus the findings in the current study are in line with the work of Anton and DiCamilla (1999) where L1 was used to make meaning of the text or in this case, the group discussion to explore and expand the content. It was also used as an essential tool in guiding their actions through the task and maintaining the dialogue. L1 may also be seen to facilitate the thinking processes and thus, essential for learners but if over used, it might be seen as limiting exposures to the target language. However, in the current study, L1 appeared to facilitate rather than deprive the students in developing their thinking process and provided opportunities for the students to explore the language. For example, in Cases 2 and 3, the use of L1 were used effectively (see Excerpts 5.15 and 5.16). In Excerpt 5.15, Nan who has always provided help in terms of grammatical structures to the group used L1 to help explain the two terms 'view' and 'scenery' and eventually, the term 'scenery' was taken up. In Excerpt 5.16, the group employed L1 as a tool to establish mutual agreement and intersubjectivity within the group and L1 was used to 'control' the discussion as can be seen in turns 16 and 17 '[what if we say]'. L1, therefore, was used to create a social as well as cognitive space in which students are able to provide each other and themselves with help throughout the task in a way which benefited the whole group. In terms of Vygotskian view of learning, the students had successfully constructed knowledge together and that the students were 'willing' to learn with and from each other (Wells, 1999, also see 2.2.1a).

### *Teacher scaffolding*

Teacher scaffolding was not initially included as an aspect for the study but while doing the observation, it was found that the teacher was regularly involved with the group interaction tasks. During the observation, I found that the students were not left to their own discretions and that the teacher walked around the class and attended to the group who had problems or needed guidance from her. During the observations, the students would normally request for clarifications from the teacher on the task itself as sometimes it appeared that they could not grasp the instructions when the teacher was talking to the whole class. Other times, the students would ask for guidance when they appeared to be stuck in generating ideas or had trouble with certain language structures (e.g. grammar; vocabulary). The teacher acted as the facilitator in helping the students



to accomplish the tasks. Hence, the teacher still has the responsibility to manage and facilitate learner contributions and also by helping them say what they mean (Walsh, 2006). Effective scaffolding from the teacher took place in the form of providing suggestions such as by expanding on the students' responses and further questioning to trigger the students to think more critically (see section 5.6 and also see Excerpt 5.17). In addition, from the stimulated recall with the students, it is also confirmed that assistance from the teacher is crucial for them to successfully complete the tasks (see Vinny's interview page 108).

#### **7.3.4 Link between group interaction and the oral presentation**

My fifth research question was concerned with possible links between the group interaction and the product (the oral presentations). The fifth question is as follows:

*RQ 5 In what ways is the collaboration related to the oral presentations?*

One other set of findings from the current study is the link between the collaboration and the oral presentations. There was very little research which focuses on the process in relation to the speaking performance (e.g. Morita, 2000). Most of the studies mainly focused on the process in relation to reading or writing skills (e.g. Storch, 2001; Guerrero and Villamil, 2000; see pages 36-38).

The study showed that collaboration seemed to help the students to feel more confident in giving their opinions. When there was collaboration during the discussion it appeared that the group members were able to 'take control' of the task (see section 6.2, also see for examples in Excerpt 6.1; turns 73-74; 135-143; Excerpt 6.9; turns 33-39). They were not afraid to contribute ideas and did not wait for the teacher to tell them what to do. It seemed that being able to share ideas and getting support and approval from their peers made the students feel more confident in giving the oral presentation (see Toms' and Vinny's interview data; pages 116 and 123). From my experience as a teacher and a student, and from my own cultural knowledge of Thai students, Thais are more collectivist in orientation than individualist (Hofstede, 2003). It is a collectivist culture where people tend to do things together. Therefore, when the students get support from their peers it built their confidence. The finding of the current study in terms of 'confidence' is different from previous studies such as Boyle (1996). Boyle's study did



not focus on how peers collaborate in preparing for the oral presentations but the emphasis was on the benefit of employing the 'Problem-Solution-Pattern Algorithm' (Jordan, 1980 in Boyle, 1996) and how the algorithm helped the students to be more confident in their ability to present their topics.

Another set of findings that emerged from the study was that it was apparent that the less capable peer benefited from the more capable ones. For example, in Case 1, Tom made use of Robert's suggestions during the group discussion and was able to compose an organised speech (see Excerpts 6.3 and 6.4; p.115). Hence, Tom has moved from the lower ground to the higher ground through interacting with peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Tom's recall (see page 116) also revealed that group work had a positive affect for his presentation (see section 6.2.1). However, Tom, the less capable student also demonstrated his ability of his vocabulary knowledge and at the same time helping out another peer (see Excerpt 4.4 turns 76 and 77). This finding is in line with Well's (1999) argument that, those who are expert in one task might have to seek help in another task.

Findings suggest that less effective group collaboration may lead to less effective oral presentation performances. It was found in Case 2 that the students did not employ the interactional strategies effectively and the ideas were not expanded thoroughly. Moreover, instead of all group members participating, it appeared that only two out of four students contributed to the discussion (see section 6.4) so the discussion was not as collaborative as it should be. When looking at the oral presentation, it lacked cohesion and organisation (see page 120 for analysis). However, it was found that the group interaction tasks provided the students the opportunity to learn and develop their skills. The students in Case 2 learned from their performances in the group discussions and the first oral presentation (informative speech), hence in the second task (persuasive speech) the discussion appeared to be a lot more collaborative. Moreover, Vinny, who did not play a significant role in the first task now contributed to the discussion and oriented the group members to contribute (see page 122 for analysis). As a result of an effective group interaction, the students' performances on the second presentation improved substantially (see Excerpt 6.9). To complement with the transcripts and the observation data, the current study also took into account the students' perceptions towards the group discussion and the oral presentations and they are discussed in the next section.



### 7.3.5 Students' perceptions

My sixth research questions focuses on students' perceptions and reads:

*RQ 6 What factors during the group discussion do students perceive to hinder or promote the quality of the oral presentation?*

The findings in relation to my last research question showed that in general, the students perceived the group interaction to benefit their oral presentation performances. From the stimulated recall data, I first discuss the factors that promoted the quality of the oral presentations followed by the factors that appeared to hinder the quality of the presentations respectively:

1. Most of the students perceived that group discussions helped them to become more confident when delivering the oral presentations. This is because of mutual help and mutual understanding that they experienced among the group members (this also confirmed the concept of intersubjectivity discussed earlier in 7.3.2). This was apparent especially when Vinny said, "I feel I need to help my friends" (see page 123). In addition, it appeared that when students investigate and explore L2 for instance when looking for the appropriate vocabulary to use (see page 122) the students were co-constructing knowledge and understandings of language learning as a collaborative achievement (Donato, 2000) also, through peer assistance, it indirectly build confidence for the students.
2. Another common answer from the recall sessions was that students benefit substantially from the group discussions because it allowed them the opportunities to share ideas. This also allowed them to be able to think more critically than when having to study or to 'think alone' just like a proverb which says, "two-heads are better than one" (see Andy and Robert's interviews page 116). In line with Donato (1994), peer interactions in a foreign language may result in the emergence of ZPD. From the socio-cultural theory perspective, the data from this study as well as data from the students' recalls provide evidence that language learning occurred in collaborative dialogue.

3. The students' awareness of their weaknesses and mistakes in that given a second task (PS) to work on, the students seemed to have become 'self-evaluators' where they tried to correct their previous mistakes and to improve on their performances. An important finding was from Vinny's recall where she found herself to be a self-evaluator in which she realised that by contributing more to the discussion, it could help the group perform better in the oral presentations (see page 123); hence achieving a sense of agency without having a teacher tell them what to do. Having said this, I do not mean that the teacher does not have a role to play. I still believe that teachers should still act as the facilitator now and then (see section 7.3.4: Teacher scaffolding). Thus, from the stimulated recalls, it can be noted that the students had a chance to reflect on their previous performances which later seemed to promote 'learning' (e.g. progress in the quality of the later discussions and the oral presentations; see analysis section 6.4.1, p. 123). Hence, making mistakes can be the key to making progress.
4. Through the stimulated recall with the students (Case 2), it was found that the students were aware that they 'played around' too much and they were not serious about what they were doing. To complement the student's perceptions, from my observation, I found that the students were quite 'laid back' during the group discussion and that they took their time talking about other things before they could get down to work (see observation notes p. 121 ) especially with their first task (informative speech).
5. Other factors that seemed to hinder the quality of the presentations were mainly because they did not refer to the resource that was available to them (e.g. textbook) and not being able to allocate sufficient time to organise the speeches (see page 114 and 120 for students' views). Preparation is an important process not only in completing a task effectively but it is also an opportunity to learn through the process of the discussion; hence, time management is very crucial when it comes to doing group work where time is normally limited for the students to get together. I believe this is when the teacher has a vital role to play where she has to provide and direct the students towards the task goal.



#### **7.4 Limitations of the study**

This study has examined in detail the discourse of three groups of Thai students who were engaged in group interaction tasks. The aim was to explore the ways students develop their ideas, collaborate and scaffold each other in order to produce effective and well organised oral presentations. Even though the findings are varied and add to previous knowledge, I recognised that the study has some limitations. Firstly, the case study is not a survey research and therefore, the three cases are not samples which represent other cases. However, my position as a qualitative researcher is in line with the interpretive approach, seeking to produce thick descriptions and in-depth narrative analysis. Secondly, the observations were also conducted in the classes of one teacher and in this sense, maybe be limited. Nevertheless, choosing an opportunity sample and because of my previous personal connection with the teacher, I was able to conduct an in-depth observation and analysis throughout a number of sessions, and was able to obtain collaboration from the research participants which I may not have been able to gain under other circumstances.

Another limitation of the study was that the time allocated for the stimulated recall sessions was limited as the timetables of most of the participants were very tight. I believe that had I had more time with the students, I could have gained more insight regarding the students' perceptions of what helped or hindered the collaboration during the group work and how it effected their oral presentations.

In addition, by adopting Vygotskian perspectives, the study was limited to investigating the students' cognitive process and the use of language. However, a factor which I have not taken into account is the history of the students' relationships (e.g. whether they are good friends and have worked together before; whether they are unfamiliar towards each other). Students' social relationship could have shed more light to how the discussions progress.

As I have distinguished the terms 'interaction' and collaboration earlier (see Chapter 2), the limitation of this study is on learning in relation to collaboration where students share ideas and think together in a more natural learning environment and is limited to

the notion that collaboration is a catalyst that promotes learning<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the study also applied the conversation analysis (CA) and ethnographic perspectives. The limitation of CA is i) because there are no preconceived categories, stretches of discourse were taken into account rather than looking at the data as a whole and ii) its inability to generalise the findings. To counter argue the two points, first, the purpose of the study is to investigate group interaction tasks and since this study employs the qualitative approach, one has to be selective in reporting the findings and this coincides with the CA method. In addition, the aim of the study is not to generalise the findings but CA was used to promote understanding of what is going on inside the classroom. In addition, the ethnographic analysis is considered to rely on the researcher's descriptions and explanations of the setting under investigation and the researcher's bias could be a problem. However, in my analysis I refer back to the research questions now and then and also communicate with the readers through my reflexive accounts. Hence, I have been transparent with what and how I selected certain transcripts and how I used my background and experience to analyse them. Having pointed out some of the limitations, I believe the study has contributed to the current knowledge in the field of classroom interactions. This is discussed in the following section.

## **7.5 Contributions to knowledge**

In this section, I integrate the findings of my study with the current knowledge and discuss the contributions that this study makes. Firstly, I would like to point out that I believe the contributions arise from the originality of this study's research design. First, a number of previous studies have provided valuable insights into group interaction tasks (e.g. Tan, 2000; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995). These studies have looked into the either pair or group interactions that have shed light on the process of what was going on during the interaction. A few other studies (e.g. De Guerrero and Villamil, 2000; Anton and DiCamilla, 1991; Storch, 2000; Walsh, 2002 ) have looked into both the process and the end product but they are linked mostly to the written assignments (e.g. essays). In contrast, this study has examined both the interactions and the end product which is the oral presentation (also see introduction). There are very few studies in the

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<sup>19</sup> There are obviously other types of teaching methods that promote learning.



field of teaching and learning that focus on oral presentations (e.g. Boyle, 1996; Morita, 2000). Boyle's study mainly emphasized on how the 'Problem-Solution' pattern algorithm and the use of 'clause relations' in constructing oral presentations helped to promote and build confidence for the students in delivering their speech. Morita's work (2000) focused mainly on the collaboration with the audience during the presentation. Morita's review of the video data was also focused only on the oral presentations and the perceptions of the students towards their performances of the presentations were solicited. However, the current study examined in depth of the discussion in the preparation stage of the oral presentation and investigated the links between the discussions and the oral presentations through employing the observation notes, video and audio recording followed by stimulated recall sessions.

This data collection strategy also constitutes a contribution to knowledge. Most of the studies in the field either used at most two or three data sets in their studies (Stokoe, 2000; Tan, 2000; Storch, 2001). However, the current study made use of all four types of methods to collect the data. As reviewed in the literature, it was found that most of the studies still employ the normal interview method. In contrast, this study employed the stimulated recalls to elicit the students' perceptions by listening to both the group discussions and the oral presentations. As mentioned earlier, there were very few studies that focus on oral presentations and there were no studies that link the group interaction tasks (the process) to oral presentations (the end product). Through analysing both the discussions and the oral presentations, the study yielded very constructive and valuable findings. These are discussed below:

- In terms of pedagogical implications, an interesting finding was that the students who were engaged in group interaction tasks seemed to receive an indirect benefit in that it builds confidence for the students to assert and voice their opinions during the group discussions. Hence, it can be said that through informal talks between peers, it has promoted the students to achieve a sense of autonomy. For instance, through questioning and probing one another which is normally the role of the teachers. Moreover, self-selection of a 'leader' in the group also implies that the students have achieved a sense of agency in that they were able to take charge of their own learning methods and to make decisions

(Macaro, 1997). This further leads on to confidence when the students deliver the speeches as they have been helped and supported by their peers during the group discussions.

- The findings of the study suggest that students are capable of providing support to their peers during collaborative L2 interactions similar to that of the expert-novice interactions. The study has shed light on some of the mechanisms students used in collaborating with each other as in the use of both L1 and L2 as well as the interactional strategies. Focusing the investigation on student collaboration, I employed Tan's idea framing taxonomy (Tan, 2000) and CA to analyse evidences of scaffolding during the group interaction tasks which revealed the students were able to expand on each others' ideas efficiently and during the course of the discussion, they were also able to extend their linguistic development through helping one another. Hence, I have departed from the scaffolding features which were created by Wood and Bruner since 1976 in which most studies dealing with the concept of scaffolding tend to apply and was normally focused on the teacher-student interactions. Therefore, I believe that Tan's idea framing taxonomy can be used to apply to studies dealing not only with idea generation tasks but it can also be used as scaffolding features in which researchers can apply in studies of scaffolding in any second language learning classrooms especially with student-student interactions.
- The current findings also contributed to professional practice and language education policy which may help teachers (especially Thai teachers) to broaden their perspectives in terms of giving more importance to what goes on in the classroom and emphasising more on formative assessments. The narrative analysis of Case 1 and the cross-case comparative analysis suggest that the group discussions helped the students to think more critically, provided them opportunities to learn and think together, and finally the students were able to accomplish the tasks. In addition, the stimulated recalls gave them a chance to reflect on the discussions and their performances on the oral presentations. The findings reveal that the students became aware that effective collaboration can lead to better performances in the end products. Therefore, it is crucial that



teachers should know what the problems students might be facing during the discussion and in order to make the discussions more effective, I believe teachers should train the students the strategies that they need to employ (e.g. ways to question one another; how to manage the tasks). Since Tan's taxonomy seemed to be a systematic framework, I believe teachers can definitely use the taxonomy as a guideline to train the students and can also use it as a form of assessing the students' performances during the discussions. This way, they can 'shoot two birds with one bullet'.

The aforementioned findings suggest that teachers should start to pay more attention to the 'process' integrate formative assessments<sup>20</sup> and not just rely fully on summative<sup>21</sup> assessment. That is, teachers should provide more feedback to the students during the group interactions and not only after the students have completed the oral presentations. As a teacher who has taught in the Thai university, I believe that if teachers become more process-oriented it would help them to understand better what is going on in the class as Rea-Dickins (2001:452) asserts,

Assessment of this kind is embedded within instruction and may be viewed as contributing to learning as opposed to measuring learning. It is concerned with developing learner awareness, understanding and knowledge. Good 'assessment for learning' thus motivates learners to become engaged in the interaction through which they are enabled to develop skill of reflection (as a basis for self- and peer-monitoring), as well as providing them with an ability to reflect meta-cognitively on their own learning.

Hence, it is crucial that the teacher themselves, also play the role as an assessor and not just focus on teaching without knowing whether the students are actually learning or not. Moreover, Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005) point out that more attention to classroom processes can lead to instructional effectiveness and in a broader sense, it can impact on the teachers' abilities to evaluate a language course/programme as a whole.

From my experience in teaching in the university in Thailand and from talking to other

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<sup>20</sup> Formative assessment is the feedback given to students during the programme/course to provide immediate evidence for student learning.

<sup>21</sup> Summative assessment is the feedback provided to students at the end of the programme, in this case, the assessment given to the students after they have delivered the oral presentations and grades are given to them.

colleagues, the large number of students in each class seemed to prevent teachers from conducting formative assessments effectively. Moreover, the teachers felt that there could be a risk of being biased because as 'human beings' they are aware that there could be the risk of them paying more attention to one group of students more than the other. However, from conducting the current research, I believe it is important that the teachers put more attention to formative assessment because like the quote above, formative assessment is not done to 'measure' learning but rather to help 'contribute' to learning of the students.

## **7.6 Concluding remarks**

This research and its findings have been invaluable for me both as a researcher and as a teacher. Beyond the various findings in relation to the factors which contribute to group collaboration, peer scaffolding, and effective task completion. I have found that Thai students tend to be more assertive and are willing to voice their opinions than I had initially thought. From examining classroom interactions, the findings reveal that group interaction tasks have provided the students with opportunities to develop their critical thinking and also to explore the use of L2. Thus, I hope that this dissertation and its findings will contribute to research in the field of L2 classroom interaction and scaffolding, and to the improvement of professional practice especially in higher educational context in Thailand as well as in other countries. I also hope that it would encourage teachers to be more 'process oriented' and not just focus on the 'end product' in their teaching as well as in assessing the students.



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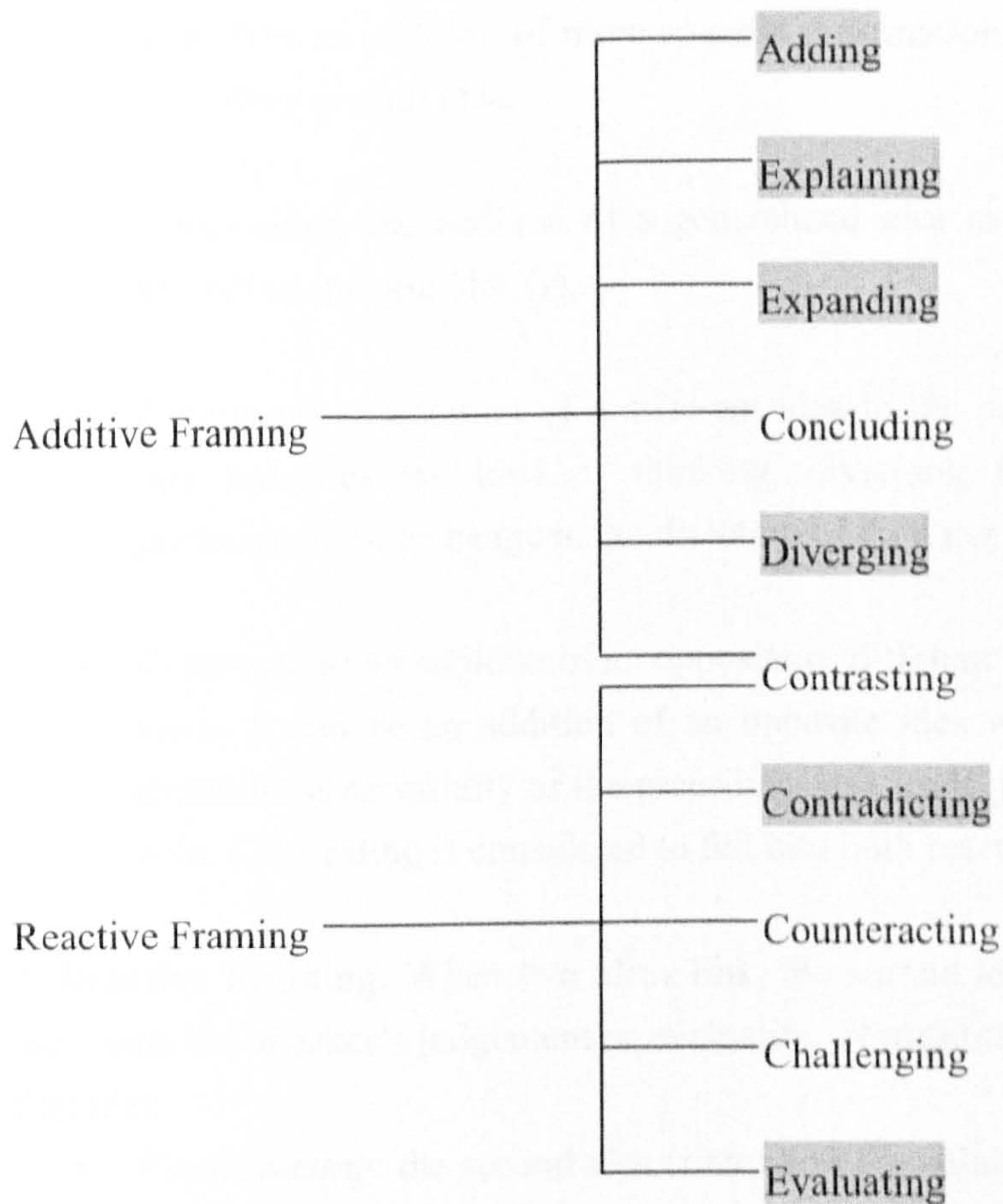
## Appendix 2.1 Scaffolding Features

### Lidz (1991) Twelve Component Behaviors of Adult Mediating Instruction

1. **Intentionality:** consciously attempting to influence the child's actions. This involves making efforts to keep the interaction going, engage the child's attention, inhibit impulsive behavior and maintain goal orientation.
2. **Meaning:** Promoting understanding by highlighting for the child what is important to notice, marking relevant differences, elaborating detail and providing related information.
3. **Transcendence:** helping the child make associations to related past experiences and project himself or herself into the future.
4. **Joint regard:** trying to see the activity through the child's eyes; looking at an object that has been brought into focus by the child; using 'we' to talk about the experience.
5. **Sharing of experiences:** Telling the child about an experience or thought that the mediator had and of which the child is not aware
6. **Task regulation:** manipulating the task to facilitate problem solving; stating a principle of solution or inducing strategic thinking in the child.
7. **Praise/Encouragement:** communicating to the child, verbally or nonverbally, that he or she has done something good; keeping high the child's self-esteem
8. **Challenge:** maintaining the activity within the limits of the child's ZPD. This implies challenging the child to reach beyond his or her current level of functioning, but not so much that the child will feel overwhelmed and get discouraged.
9. **Psychological differentiation:** keeping in mind that the task is the child's and not the mediator's; that the goal is the child to have a learning experience, not the adult. Avoiding competitiveness with the child.
10. **Contingent responsivity:** the ability to read the child's behavior and to respond appropriately. It can be compared to a well-coordinated dance between two partners who are very much in tune to one another.
11. **Affective involvement:** Expressing warmth to the child; giving the child a sense of caring and enjoyment in the task.
12. **Change:** communicating to the child that he or she has made some change or improved in some way.



## Appendix 2.2 Framing of Idea Taxonomy



Framing of Idea Taxonomy (Tan, 2000: 227)

**1. Additive Framing:** an additive link in which the second idea is an addition to the first idea without any judgement or evaluation or comment on the quality.

- **Adding-** the addition of a similar idea to the preceding idea or the list of ideas preceding it.
- **Explaining-** the second idea is an explanation of the first idea. It can be a). causal (reasoning): the second idea can be a reason or purpose to justify the first idea (answering 'why' question) or a consequence result of the first idea or b). temporal sequential (sequencing): the second idea describes an even that happens after, or before, or simultaneously with the event described the first idea.



- **Expanding:** the second idea is an elaboration on a part or the whole of the first idea. It is an addition of more specific information to the part or whole of the preceding general idea.
- **Concluding:** the addition of a generalized idea to a part or the whole of the preceding specific idea (s).
- **Diverging:** an addition of a different idea to the preceding ideas. This type of link indicates the kind of thinking, diverging from the flow of thinking preceding it, or a change in the direction of thinking to something different.
- **Contrasting:** an addition of an opposite or different idea to the preceding idea or ideas. It can be an addition of an opposite idea which does not question the truthfulness or validity of the preceding idea itself, just to show two sides of the coin. Contrasting is considered to fall into both reactive and additive framing.

**2. Reactive Framing:** When two ideas link, the second idea is an addition to the first idea, with the speaker's judgement or evaluation or truthfulness, validity or value of the first idea.

- **Contradicting:** the second idea contradicts the validity or truthfulness of the first idea, indicating that the first idea is not true.
- **Counteracting:** the second idea reduces the validity or truthfulness of the first idea, indicating that the validity or truthfulness of the first idea is reduced under certain specific conditions that the first idea is only partially true by pointing out the specific conditions under which the first idea is not true.
- **Challenging:** a weaker form of 'contradicting'. The second idea questions the validity or value rather than the truthfulness of the first idea. The second idea often come in the form of a question, usually 'why' question or in the form of a command.
- **Evaluating:** the second idea is an evaluation of the quality, truthfulness or validity of the first idea. The second idea is an evaluative comment such as 'that's good', 'that's interesting' etc. judging the quality of the first idea by using evaluative adjectives (e.g. interesting, good).



## Appendix 2.3 Interactional modifications in the negotiation of meaning

Interactional feature	Definition
Clarification request	Any expression that elicits clarification of the preceding utterance
Confirmation check	Any expression immediately following the previous speaker's utterance intended to confirm that the utterance was understood correctly
Comprehension check	Any expression designed to establish whether the speaker's own preceding utterance has been understood by the addressee
<b>Self-repetitions</b>	
(1) repairing	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of her own utterance in order to help the addressee overcome a communication problem
(2) preventive	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of her own utterance in order to prevent the addressee experiencing a communication problem
(3) reacting	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of one of her previous utterances to help establish or develop the topic of conversation
<b>Other-repetitions</b>	
(1) repairing	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of the other speaker's utterance in order to help overcome a communication problem
(2) reacting	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of the other speaker's utterance in order to help establish or develop the topic of conversation
(from Pica & Doughty, 1985)	



**I-R-F Acts**

Teacher talk	Meta-interactive		1. Marker 2. Loop
	Interactive	Initiation	3. Informative 4. Directive 5. Elicitation 6. Starter
		Response	7. Acknowledge 8. React 9. Reply
		Follow-up	10. Accept 11. Evaluate 12. Comment
	Turn-taking		13. Cue 14. Nomination
Pupil talk	Interactive	Initiation	15. Pupil initiation
		Response	16. Pupil response
	Turn-taking		17. Bid
Silence			18. Silence or confusion

I-R-F Acts (from Coulthard 1985:126)



**Appendix 2.4 Scaffolding Features**

<i>Scaffolding Features (Donato, 1994)</i>	<i>Scaffolding Features (Wood and Wood, 1996)</i>
<div>1. Recruiting interest in the task</div> <div>2. Simplifying the task</div> <div>3. Maintaining the pursuit of the goal</div> <div>4. Marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution</div> <div>5. Controlling frustration during problem solving</div> <div>6. Demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed</div>	<div>1. Recruitment of the child's interest of the task</div> <div>2. Maintaining an orientation towards task-relevant goals</div> <div>3. Highlighting critical features of the task that the child might overlook</div> <div>4. Demonstrating how to achieve goals and controlling frustration</div>

## Appendix 2.5 Signalling Relations

### 1. Lexical Signals:

- Vocabulary words: *way, reason, example, difference result, achieve, condition, compare and contrast*
- Enumeration: 'There are *three types of headaches*, they are .....'; 'I can *list* you here *about five symptoms*' ....
- Advance labelling: 'Ok, now *I would like to deal about* .....'; 'I want to *show to demonstrate*'
- Question: asking questions

(Tadros, 1994:79-81 in Boyle, 1996)

### 2. Lexical Repetition

- Repeating words to focus the attention of the listeners or the readers

### 3. Grammatical and lexical parallelism

- By posing initial questions that predict answers and those answers come as a generalisation-example patterns (e.g. where does depression come from? Usually depression come from our body and our mind); lexical parallelism (e.g. ... such as we lost our job, we lost our loved ones, we lost our car... and so on).

(Boyle, 1996)

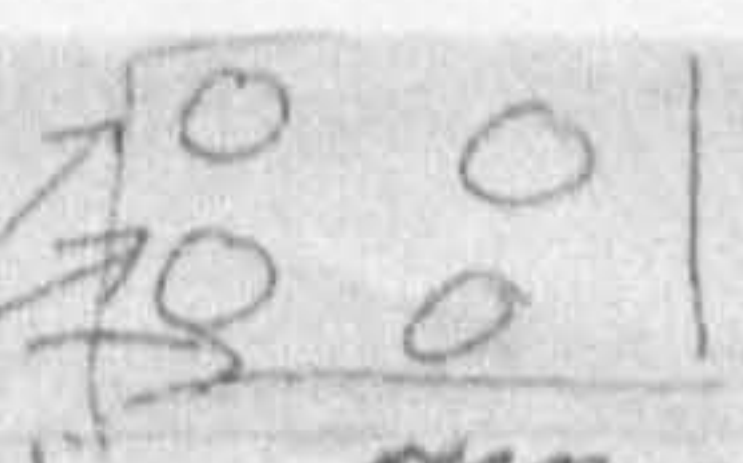


Appendix 3.1 Student Profile

Case	Student	Educational Background	
		International Thai students	Thai students
Case 1	Robert	X	
	Andy	X	
	Pat	X	
	Tom	X	
Case 2	Jan		X
	Nan		X
	Vinny		X
	Pin		X
Case 3	Dawn	X	
	Wendy		X
	Sally	X	



## Appendix 3.2 Field notes during the observation

Observation Grp C	VDO  24/1/05
First 10 mins.	Researcher's comments & reflective acc.
1. One member did a research & brought some pictures; students discussing & commenting on the pictures	Prep. seems to be an imp. part in determining how grp. performs
2. Since the grp. got the topic already, most of the time was spent on writing the outline	- time management - imp.
3. Robert took care of writing outline.	- I wasn't expecting him to take charge in the first place; I think the change of role of the students is imp. "they are in the same boat - help one another, not just relying on one particular person"
4. joking around while working.	
5. Root pose questions to other members; providing & asking for feedback also.	* In the beg. it's nice to see how excited the students are; they show off what they've prepared
10-20min.	
- Teacher approaches & students ask q. they weren't sure if they're on the right track	- Group not independent; need help from teacher now & then.
- when anyone of the grp. members have a question, they ask Robert	- Probably, it's cuz Robert is the 'expert' in this topic, he did most of the clarifications & explanations;
	* Once I experienced similar thing; did grp work and the other grp. members chose my topic; I had to do a lot of explanations to others



### Appendix 3.3 Stimulated Recall Procedures and Instructions

I first provided explanation of the steps of how the stimulated recall would proceed to the students. The instructions were:

What we're going to do now is listen to your group discussions I have recorded. We will listen to your recorded discussions from my laptop. I am interested in what you were thinking at the time you were delivering the speech. What I'd like you to do is to tell me what you were thinking, what was in your mind at that time while you were giving the speech. So while listening to the discussions, if you want to tell me something about what you were thinking, you can press pause. If I have a question about what you are thinking then I will push pause and ask you to talk about that part of the discussion.

Guideline questions I used for the recall sessions:

*What were you thinking here/ at this point/ right then?*

*Can you tell me what you were thinking at that point?*

*Can you tell me what you thought when she/he said that?*

*I see you're laughing/looking confused/saying something there, what were you thinking?*

Guidelines I adopted as suggested by Gass and Mackey (2000):

If the participant begins to talk over the tape, pause the tape and angle the remote control towards the participant so that she can release the pause when she is finished talking.

Additionally, researchers should not give concrete reactions to participants' responses. Backchannelling or non-responses are preferable. For example,

*Oh*

*Hmmm*

*I see*

*Uh-huh*

*Ok*

(Adapted from Gass and Mackey, 2000)

## Appendix 3.4 Translation of the transcripts from Thai to English

### Episode: Selecting a topic

1. แนน [คิดถึงประเด็นก่อน แล้วเราก็อเลือกทีหลัง เลือกทีหลัง]

Nan: [think of the points first(.) then we can select later(.) select later]

2. [ตอนนี้ ทำไมเราแต่ละคนไม่เสนอหัวข้อล่ะ]

Tan:[ now(.) why don't we each suggest a topic]

3. [ขอฉันคิดก่อนนะ]

Nan: [let me think]

4. [เราพูดเรื่องผู้ชายได้ไหม] (หัวเราะคิกคัก)

Pin: [can we talk about men] (giggling)

5.[เราควรจะพูดหัวข้ออะไรดี]

Nan :[ what topic should we talk about?]

6.[วิธีกำจัดขนตามร่างกาย] ((หัวเราะ))

Tan: [how to eliminate body hair?] ((laughing))

7. กำจัด กำจัด เขียน กำจัด ((หัวเราะ))

Nan: eliminate(.) eliminate(.) write(.) eliminate ((laughing))

8. // นี่คือ //

Tan:// this is //

9.Pin: [/c'mon // (.) what topic]?

[//...// หัวข้ออะไรดี]

10 เกาะกูดนี่ เราก็บอกว่ามีเรือเราจะเดินทางไปเกาะ ก็ให้นั่งรถประจำทางจากสถานีขนส่งไปจังหวัดตราด จากนั้นก็ต่อรถยนต์

Nan: Kood Island?()[we can say]() when we go to the island(.) take the bus from coach station to Trat \*  
province and then take a car

11.[ถ้าจั้น แล้วอะไรอีก เกี่ยวกับวัยรุ่นเหรอ]

Tan: [so(.) what else? About teenagers?]

12 [ต่างประเทศ ความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม]

Nan: [abroad]() culture shock

13 แล้วหัวข้อชีวิตกลางคืนล่ะ ไม่เอาเหรอ

Tan: how about night life(.) no?

14 การท่องเที่ยว การท่องเที่ยว

Nan tourism(.) tourism

15 [มันกว้างเกินไป]

Vinny: [it's too general]

16 [การท่องเที่ยว] [แต่เราก็สามารถเลือกหัวข้อที่เฉพาะเจาะจงได้นี่นา มีรูปของพวกเราตอนไปเที่ยวที่นั่นนะ]

Nan: [tourism]() but we can choose something specific(.) we have many pictures of us on that trip too



Appendix 3.5 Second researcher's analysis

The extract below provides the second analyser's interpretations. His interpretations appear in italics.

**Note:** Where the second analyser had no additional comments in addition to mine, she has underlined them.

Turn/Text	Interactional Functions
37. Wendy: ok (.) [I'm interested in going to  Taiwan (.) can let people know about the country ]  (10)	Initiating-contributing ideas <i>Initiating; Employing a beginning of discussion utterance ('ok') and suggests a topic + a direction for speech contents ('can let people know about the country')</i>
38. Dawn: about me (.) how to (.) how to make mummies	<u>Diverging</u>
39. Wendy: make what?	3 Questioning: for clarification
40. Dawn: //mummies//	4 <u>Response</u>
41. Sally: //mummies//	5 <u>Response</u>
42. Wendy: =hmmmm=  (15)	6 Responding <i>Expresses understanding of word meaning</i>
43. Dawn: hmmm (8) what about this one? ((pointing at the list))	7 Diverging <i>Ignores previous ideas, diverge</i>
44. Wendy: about (.) stationary (.) like B2S and Double AA* (brands of a stationary shops in Thailand) (inaudible) which shop to compete with um (.) oh (.) like 7 Eleven (24 hour shop) (.) right (.) they sell the products like pencil, rubber, like that (.) but they open 24 hour right (.) but Double AA will (inaudible) something like B2S, pad and (inaudible) a book like that...	8 Expanding <i>Expand on the previous one. Similarly to turn 1, she suggests a topic + a direction for the speech contents</i>

<p>45. Dawn: how could you get the information about Double AA? (3) coz I never know about this before (.) and I'm afraid that (.) information like (.) we couldn't find enough (.) might be (.) we don't have much to say....</p>	<p>9 Questioning- contradicting <i>Responds to initiation by evaluating the validity of first idea ('how can you know...?') Does it by first questioning the validity then adds a personal contradiction ('I never know'.) and then moves to a general evaluation of validity of the idea ('We don't have much to say'), thus 'closes the matter'</i></p>
<p>46. Wendy: I like to read a book about market share you know (.) it have many information about that (.) about competition and market share and umm.... I need to present about this before (.) and I think this (.) I have a clip VDO to show (.) advertise that (.) Double AA not just paper</p>	<p>10. Expanding-justifying <i>Tries gently to 'revive' by expanding his/her idea by implicitly (unintentionally?) implying the importance of it for him/herself and its potential as a discussion topic ('I have a clip VDO...')</i></p>
<p>47. Dawn: And how about Starbucks?</p>	<p>11. <u>Diverging</u></p>
<p>48. Wendy: Starbucks??? I <u>always</u> (.) many subjects (.) I always listen to Starbucks in many subject like in Business Communication, and many subjects (.) always speaking about Starbucks.</p>	<p>12 Contradicting <i>Expanding (by now Wendy has made 3 moves which aimed at progressing and scaffolding discussion.</i></p>
<p>49. Sally: hmmm.... ok (...) shopping ((softly)) ((looking at the list)) what about shoes? (.) so what you want us to talk about (.) like brand name or?</p>	<p>13 Diverging <i>Diverges to a completely different idea.</i></p>

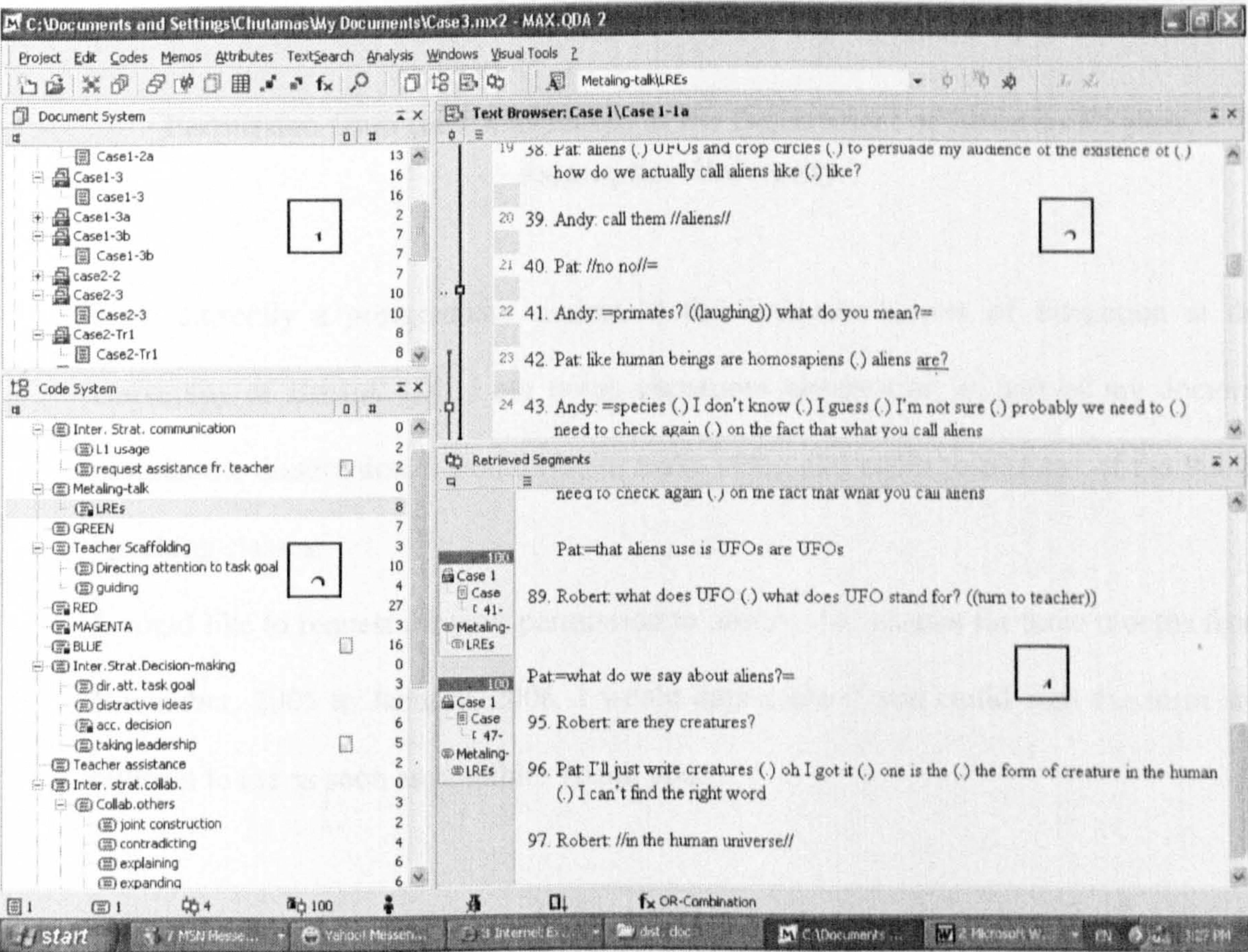


50. Wendy: like style of shoes like (.) because shoes (.) can represent the type character people want to wear it like	14 Expanding <i>Expands on previous idea and adds specific contents for a potential topic. Again, it looks like Wendy has taken upon he/his self the international strategies which have a potential to facilitate decision making.</i>
51. Sally: I think most of the (inaudible) are females and I think they already know about like (.) high heels or flat type or	15 Contradicting <i>Evaluation of quality of previous idea (the audience already know about the topic more than we do) which implies contradiction</i>
52. Wendy: can talk about the brand or beautiful design or umm or u need for...	16 Expanding-justifying Responses to previous move. Expansion. Tries to 'save' Sally's initiation from 'fading away'.



# Appendix 3.6 Using MAXqda

Below is a screenshot of how the MAXqda software has been employed



The transcripts, typed in the Microsoft-word are first saved as 'Rich Text Files' and were then loaded into the MAXqda's document system. In (1) I used the text browser to store all the transcripts and (2) I went through each transcript to code segments base on the code list in (3); the indicated squares in the code system are the memos in which I wrote either my personal comments or any issues in concerned in relation to the segment(s) of the data. All the data that were given particular code(s) can also be retrieved and looked at in (4). This way, the computer-aided qualitative analysis allows a researcher to be able to look at all the coded segments systematically.



## **Appendix 3.7 Consent Forms**

### **Consent Form**

#### **Permission from the Chairperson of the Department of Business English, Assumption University**

I am currently a postgraduate student at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol, UK. I am doing classroom observation as part of my doctoral programme dissertation. I would like to make video and audio recordings of the Public Speaking classes.

I would like to request for your permission to observe the classes for three months from November, 2005 to January, 2006. I would appreciate if you could sign the form and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Student Consent Form**

### **Classroom Observation**

**November, 2005**

Please tick the boxes below:

☐ I consent to being recorded while in class, during the group discussion and the oral presentations

☐ I consent to the recordings being analysed for the research purposes. Anonymity will be preserved if extracts are included in research publications or reports.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Consent Form for Interviews**

**November, 2005**

I consent to being recorded during the interview sessions and being used as part of the  
Doctoral dissertation, academic papers or seminars by the researcher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4.1 Descriptions of the Tasks

**Assignments:** Students are to form in groups of 3-5 and to work on two group tasks in the term (one before their midterm exams and one after before their final exams). For Group Task 1, they have to decide on a topic for an 'Informative speech' (group task 1) and for Group Task 2, they decide on a 'persuasive speech'. For both tasks, they are asked to write out an outline and finally to give a group oral presentations.

### Group Task 1: Informative Speech

Task A: Students are assigned to select a topic for the speech.

Task B: Students are to write an outline for the teacher after they have agreed on a topic. Prior to the task, students are taught the different types of informative speeches and how they can organize the speech. In organizing the informative speech, the students have to classify their topic as to they type their topic falls into (see examples of types of informative speeches below). Finally, they are to compose an outline similar to an example provided below (section c). Every group must provide the outline to the teacher prior to the presentation

#### a. Four Types of Informative Speeches:

1. *Speeches about objects*: include anything that is visible and tangible. They may include places, structures, animals, or people. Examples are cameras, roller blades, subways, etc.
2. *Speeches about processes*: a systematic series of actions that leads to a specific result or product. Speeches about process explain how something is made, done, or how something works (e.g. to inform my audience how to save people from drowning)
3. *Speeches about events*: it is anything that happens or regarded as happening (e.g. job interviews, figure skating, attention deficit disorder)



4. *Speeches about concepts*: concepts are beliefs, theories, ideas, and principles (e.g. religious belief, theories of psychology, concepts of science).

#### **b. Organisation of Informative Speeches (Types of Orders')**

1. *Chronological order*: explaining the process step by step from beginning to end; explaining the evolution of the subject
2. *Spatial order*: describing the main features of something
3. *Causal order*: explaining history of an event the causes and effects
4. *Problem/solution*: mostly employed in persuasive speech rather in informative speech
5. *Topical*: focus on the major principles or techniques; explaining features, origins, and benefits.

#### **c. Example of Structured Outline of Informative Speech**

1. *Specific Purpose*: To inform my audience of the common methods used by stage magicians to perform tricks.
2. *Central Idea*: Stage magicians use two common methods to perform their tricks- mechanical devices and sleight of hand.
3. *Main points*:
  - I. Many magic tricks rely on mechanical devices that may require little skill by the magician.
  - II. Other magic tricks depend on the magician's skill in fooling people by sleight-of-hand.

(Lucas, 1998: 343-351)

## **Group Task 2: Persuasive Speech**

Task A: Students are assigned to select a topic for the speech.

Task B: Students are to write an outline for the teacher after they have agreed on a topic. Prior to the task, students are taught the different types of persuasive speeches and how they can organize the speech. In organizing the persuasive speech, the students have to classify their topic to the type of persuasive speech (whether it is a question of fact, value, or policy). Finally, they are to compose an outline similar to an example provided below (section c). Every group must provide the outline to the teacher prior to the presentation.

### **a) Types of Persuasive Speeches**

1. *Questions of Fact*: - a question about the truth or falsity of an assertion; use of facts to persuade.
2. *Questions of Value*: -a question about the worth, rightness, morality, and so forth of an idea or action.
3. *Questions of Policy*: -a question about whether a specific course of action should or should not be taken; it is the type of speech in which the speaker's goal is to gain immediate action from the audience.
  - issues to consider in questions of policy
    1. Need: there is no point in arguing for a policy unless the speaker show a need for it
    2. Plan: once the speaker shows that a problem exists, he/she must explain the plan to for solving it.
    3. Practicality: the speaker has to show the audience that the suggested plan will work.

### **b) Organisations of Persuasive Speeches**

1. Speeches of questions of facts are usually organised topically
2. Speeches of questions of value are almost always organised topically.



3. Speeches of questions of policy fall under (a) problem-solution order, (b) problem-cause-solution order, (c) comparative advantages order, and (d) Monroe's motivated sequence.

a. *Problem-solution order*: in the main points, the speaker has to demonstrate the need for new policy by showing the seriousness of the problem.

b. *Problem-cause-solution order*: the speaker has to produce a speech with 3 main points- identifying a problem, analysing the causes of the problem, and presenting a solution to the problem.

c. *Comparative advantages order*: speaker organises the speeches in which each main point explains why a speaker's solution to a problem is preferable to other proposed solutions.

d. *Monroe's motivated sequence*: speaker organises the speeches that seek immediate actions. There are five steps that the speaker has to follow:

1. **Attention**: capture audience's attention by making startling statement in the introduction, posing a question

2. **Need**: show the audience that a serious problem exist and illustrate with strong supporting materials.

3. **Satisfaction**: speaker provides a solution by presenting the plan and how it will work.

4. **Visualisation**: speaker gives vivid imagery to who the listeners how they will profit from the policy.

5. **Action**: once the audience is convinced, the speaker calls for action by saying what you want them to do and how.

### **c) Example of Structured Outline of Persuasive Speech**

1. *Specific Purpose:* To persuade my audience that life existed on Mars 3 billion years ago.

2. *Central Ideas:* Scientific analysis of a Martian meteorite found in Antarctica indicates that life existed on Mars 3 billion years ago.

3. *Main points:*

- I. The meteorite contains a type of molecule that can result from the decomposition of living organisms.
- II. Crystals in the meteorite have the same shape as crystals formed by bacteria on Earth.
- III. Crystals in the meteorite also contain other key similarities to crystals found in 3-billion-year-old fossils from Earth.

**Note: Framework of the oral presentations are taken from the Public Speaking text used in the course (Lucas, 1998: 370-392).**